

CORSO DI FORMAZIONE SUL CARISMA DELLA FAMIGLIA PAOLINA

BROTHERHOOD IN THE PAULINE FAMILY

(A step by step progress towards perfect fraternity)

Moderator:

Don. Angelo Colacrai, ssp

Submitted by:

Arockiam Rayappan Kudichervai



ROME, 2018-2019

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— Brother Arockiam Kudichervai

BBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

AD *Abundantes divitiae gratiae suae*

DF *Donec formetur Christus in vobis*

UPS *Ut Perfectus sit homo Dei*

EG *Evangelii Gaudium*

TG *Timothy Giaccardo*

DSGC Demande du diplôme supérieur de gestion et de comptabilité
(Application for a Higher Diploma in Management and Accounting)

CD *Christus Dominus* (Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishop in the Church)

SP “San Paolo”, Internal bulletin of SSP (Since 1926)

VC “Vita Consecrata”

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INTRODUCTION

While the rest of the world accelerates towards power, wealth and worldly spirit as pointed out by Pope Francis, “Spiritual worldliness, which hides behind the appearance of piety and even love for the Church, consists in seeking not the Lord’s glory but human glory and personal well-being”¹ at the cost of humanity, the call to strive for perfection of charity is something unthinkable to an ordinary human being. In this context, the Pauline Brotherhood is striving to climb the mount of that Calvary. Obviously, only a few opt for this vocation for it demands a kind of disfiguration in this life in order to be configured with Christ and to experience the joy of the Transfiguration of Christ. They are the few, known as Disciples of the Divine Master, who are called by God to give themselves totally to Him and to be instruments to carry out the mission of spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ through the modern means of Social Communications.²

A favourite title, “*Disciples of the Divine Master*” true to itself, was given by the Founder of the Pauline Family, Blessed Alberione, to the Pauline Brothers, to whom he assigned the task of multiplying the Word of God and spreading it all over the world. In calling the Brothers “*Disciples*” and entrusting to them the duty of proclaiming the Gospel, Blessed Alberione was very close to the teachings of Vatican II, where it says, “The obligation of spreading the faith is imposed on every disciple of Christ, according to his state.”³ Alberione constantly taught his disciples to harmonize their inner life by humanizing their mind, will and heart to live a life of simplicity, hard work and firm will, and by following the examples of Saint Joseph and Saint Paul. Now the Brothers can include Alberione himself in this group of models of simplicity and humility. He instructed them frequently to respond faithfully to their call to be disciples of Jesus; they also must consecrate themselves to love the Lord with an undivided heart and in fraternity and communion with the priests and the members of the Pauline Family.

The name “Disciples of the Divine Master” summarizes the purpose of each disciple in fraternity to place himself at the school of the Master,

listening to Him, knowing Him, and understanding Him. Their life of Pauline Brotherhood is a celebration of life and love in unity and total integrality of their mind, will and heart.

It is said elsewhere that the greatest results in life are usually attained by simple means and the exercise of ordinary qualities. True to this saying, the Disciples of the Divine Master find themselves privileged to be in a group of Brothers unknown to the world but with many great results and achievements in their simplicity of life. They enjoy doing whatever they do for God and His people, spreading happiness around them, and have what we call the “shine-shine” quality of Brothers living and working together. Their simplicity and love for the people around them lead them to the sanctification of their whole being of mind, will and heart.

The disciples always examine themselves in the light of their reading of the Word of God and by their media apostolate abandon their life to God so as to bring life, to give life, and to destroy all that destroys life in the world. Their reflection on their own life and life in the world makes them passionate to destroy all that destroys life in the world, as Jesus came into this world to give fullness of life: “I came to give life — life in all its fullness” (Jn 10:10). The Disciples dedicate themselves to love and serve others by their way of life of Fraternity and Brotherhood. Their love and service gives life to a world deprived of life, making them a symbol of life and love. This symbol of life is not achieved within a day; it uses a step-by-step method to arrive at the symbol of the Pauline Brotherhood.

Blessed Alberione points out a great Saint of simplicity and hard work, highlighting his spirituality to the Disciples. To this marvellous Saint Joseph, Alberione entrusted the Disciples, instituting a special devotion to him as Patron of the Pauline Brotherhood. The Brothers accept him as an exemplary model of simplicity and love. It is therefore befitting for them to pray for humility, simplicity and brotherly love as they venerate Saint Joseph, the champion of these virtues, who dedicated his whole life to the service of Jesus and Mary. In this way the Pauline Brotherhood remains not merely a title but a challenge to their life of simplicity in having neither name, fame, nor position; nor a source of achievement in their life.

It is in fact a brotherhood of “being”, and not a brotherhood of “having”, as

it is a symbol of life to be lived and love to be shared. It is essentially being a significant other in sharing and loving all those who long for the love of a brother in their life, because a brother becomes a brother in the presence of the other. In fact, every human being longs to be accepted and loved by others, but we find only a few persons giving their love unconditionally like Jesus. As we build up our relationships *the other* becomes a source of wealth. It is *the other* who encourages, appreciates and helps us enjoy life. The significant other is a brother with whom everybody can share his or her thoughts, feelings and emotions, and grow. The greater the significant other, the greater will be the capacity for our growth in the Brotherhood.

The Pauline Brotherhood creates in the community of Brothers a way to open their hearts to each other and increase their love for the other. As a result, a gift of fellowship and brotherhood is being created among them. They can pour out their heartfelt love and create among themselves a real fraternity of brotherhood. During his life on earth Saint Joseph, patron of Pauline Brotherhood, lived this brotherhood and protected the lives of Jesus and Mary.

This reality of the Pauline Brotherhood is intertwined in a festivity of life and love through the Eucharistic celebration as a symbol of unity and fellowship. As the body of Jesus is broken every day and given to the Brothers, they break themselves in turn for one another and become food for others. This quality of breaking themselves for others begins with the basic value of being human, such as how to be a Brother to the person sitting next to them; how to accept the other as he or she is; how to be a caring and compassionate person, etc.

As the apostolate of the Pauline Brothers is to multiply and share the Word of God with millions all over the world, they have the primary obligation of living the Word of God in their lives.

Through modern media they liberate the preaching of priests from dependence upon common workers and multiply it infinitely. The Brother's work uplifts his activity, makes it joyful, and multiplies it. And God is thus glorified, the Gospel is announced, souls are enlightened!

"Being a Brother" helps them to "Become a Brother" for Christ and ultimately leads them to be Brothers of Christ. It helps them to

altruistically live their Brotherhood as a symbol of love. Therefore it is evident that where there is Brotherhood, there is love, and where there is altruistic love, there is Brotherhood. An incident that took place in one of the Patrician communities of Brothers is worthy of note. A Bishop was invited to preside over the inaugural Mass of a Convention of Religious Brothers held in one of the cities of South India. During the felicitation ceremony after the Mass, a little boy from their school who had an experience of the lifestyle of the Brothers approached the bishop and asked him an innocent question, “Your Lordship, when are you going to become a Brother?” It seems ridiculous but when reflected upon, we will find a treasure in terms of being a Brother and becoming a Brother! Therefore it calls us forth to live an integrated life of Brotherhood, claiming the stairway of Brotherhood one by one, starting from universal brotherhood to human brotherhood; from human brotherhood to Christian Brotherhood; from Christian Brotherhood to Religious Brotherhood; and finally from Religious Brotherhood to Pauline Brotherhood.

The Pauline Brotherhood that the Brothers imbibe is meant to be “freedom from” and “freedom for”. It is primarily meant to be free from enslavement to sin in order to liberate those who are enslaved by their sins, as Saint Paul says: “You have been called to live in freedom, my brothers. But don’t use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love” (Gal 5:13).

It is in liberating their mind, will and heart, by allowing the Spirit of God to work in them to clear out the layers of the virus of worldly attachments, that they achieve the inherent quality of “freedom from”, leading them to have an intimate experience of the Transfiguration of Jesus on His way to Mount Calvary.

Then, by being crucified with Christ while they work for “freedom for”, they reach the ultimate goal of their Pauline Brotherhood: the experience of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus, as Saint Paul states: “My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Gal 2:20)

This calls forth a Christ-centred Brotherhood that demands a sort of disfiguration in this life by voluntary acceptance of their daily sufferings

for the sake of their brothers on the cross of community life. It is similar to the life of Jesus, whose cross became His medium to strengthen their following the way of the cross to Calvary. Christ's Transfiguration and Resurrection is to be experienced by the brothers by means of a configuration with Jesus through the three nails of humility, detachment and charity on the cross of their community life, so as to say with Saint Peter, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" (Mt 17:4).

Following is recalling, redoing, renewing, regulating in terms of their determination as regards their commitment to Jesus. It is dying to their pride, their egoistic tendency to worldliness; freeing themselves from the clutches of worldly attachments so as not to be possessed by them. It is being charitable not only to those who are charitable, but to all persons, especially the elderly, disabled persons in the community.

Human as they are, this commitment of theirs actually disfigures them a great deal, creating a tendency to give up their efforts and the cross that they have embraced. In such times of helplessness they must turn to Jesus, following the three ways given by their Founder, Blessed Alberione, in his book *Donec Formetur Christus in Vobis*: Way of Purification, Way of Illumination and Way of Union with God.⁴ When, in the silence of their hearts, they focus on God in these three steps of prayer, God purifies and liberates them from every clutch of attachment in their hearts. They will see their vocation to the Pauline Brotherhood as fully human and fully alive as Jesus lived with love for each and everyone. Their call to freedom has to pass through three stages: disfiguration with Jesus, configuration with Jesus, and transfiguration with Jesus; so that they can boldly say, together with Saint Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20).

All their spiritual exercises and apostolic activities are oriented to help them to climb, step by step, to the mount of Calvary. As they advance in climbing the Calvary of Pauline Brotherhood, the Lord will assist them with His spiritual consolations and reward them a hundredfold here on earth, as He has promised. Jesus nourishes and nurtures them every day with His Word and the Eucharist in order to help them climb this Calvary

of Christ-centred Pauline Brotherhood. It is only by their living this Brotherhood that they can make Christ relevant to the diverse cultures of the world, just as Saint Paul did in the first century.

The goal of Pauline Brotherhood that they have opted for is to strain to attain such Transfiguration in this life and Resurrection after being crucified with Christ on Calvary. The following chapters are obviously openings of the way of the Pauline Brotherhood towards the Calvary of being crucified with Christ by giving and sharing their whole being with everyone in the world and the Pauline Family in particular.

Chapter – 1

THE MEANING OF BROTHERHOOD

Brotherhood can be defined as the capacity of human beings to love and serve others in communion with creation. God has put into the hearts of each and every human the law of this innate spiritual and social nature. Besides this noble quality of humans there is also a hidden desire to be egocentric. The egocentricity of humans goads them to exploit others and all created things in order to overpower them. An egocentric person will talk to others out of loneliness, for his or her own advantage, but a genuine brother will talk to others out of concern for them, no matter who the other is or whether he is the right or wrong person. There are grades of this brotherliness that a person can ascend on the way towards perfection. It depends on one's ability to control one's egoism and grow in altruism.

Hierarchy of Brotherhood

The more humans grow in altruism, the higher will be the grade of their Brotherhood. When the growth of brotherliness reaches the highest level it leads to an experience of bliss – an experience of 'transfiguration'. To attain such bliss they must claim the five stages of Brotherhood: These are interconnected stages or steps towards the mount of the Calvary of Brotherhood. Each stage is a step higher than the preceding one, like a stairway. This step-by-step method is graded and intertwined as one path to perfection. It is thus a matter of living the Brotherhood primarily as a human person, and ultimately a Christ-centred life.

It is a life of happiness; an appreciation of the wonder of being alive, and a journey towards perfection. On this journey, in their effort to strain forward to the goal, the Brothers may meet with a number of blocks and hardships. They are helped by their prayer life through the way of purification, the way of illumination and the way of union: the three ways to spiritual perfection of Blessed Alberione in his book titled *Donc formetur Christus in vobis*⁵. As they progress towards contemplative prayer, the perfection of Brotherliness in them takes them to perfect Brotherhood. In this process they have to take one step at a time: from

universal brotherhood to human brotherhood; from human brotherhood to Christian Brotherhood; from Christian Brotherhood to Religious Brotherhood, and finally from Religious Brotherhood to Pauline Brotherhood. We shall reflect in the following pages how these steps are being realised in the life of the Pauline Brothers.

Universal Brotherhood

Universal brotherhood is the first step in experiencing the bliss of Brotherhood. It begins with the unity of the Brothers with nature, in communion with the Creator. It is the progress of the human spirit towards its transcendence, regardless of belief, nationality, gender or economic status. It is a totality of human life in relationship with the universe, considering all, humans and creatures, as brothers and sisters. The whole purpose of creation is to live in harmony with one another and the universe.

Universal Brotherhood leads the Brothers to become part and parcel of nature and to read it like a love letter from the Creator. The more they read with heart and mind, the more they understand the Person who has written it; the more they understand Him, the more they fall in love with the Creator. They will not throw away the love letter or destroy it, but read it again and again, and keep it safely for further reading. They will become co-creators and sing together with Daniel: "Sun and moon, praise the Lord; thunder and rain, praise the Lord; shining stars, praise the Lord; to Him be glory forever! (Ps 148:3)

An integrated spirituality of Brotherhood is called for. As they belong to the earth, they share a common destiny with the earth. They need to fill the earth and all living beings with the fellowship of Brotherhood. Human participation is an indispensable requirement for maintaining creation. Saint Francis of Assisi, model of universal brotherhood, lived his life in such a way that even the birds and animals used to surround him. He used to call them his brothers and sisters and even prayed thus:

*Be praised, my Lord, for Brother Wind
And for the air, cloudy and clear and all weather!
By which you give substance to your creatures!
Be praised, my Lord, for our sister, Mother Earth,
Who sustains and governs us,*

*And produces fruits with colourful flowers and leaves!*⁶

Francis' gesture in lying naked on Mother Earth strikingly reveals how comfortable Francis had become with the whole of creation, including his human body. Like Adam before the fall, Francis was not ashamed of his nakedness. Francis had become keenly aware that Jesus, in His incarnation, had entered our world and transformed the Earth (and the human form) through His saving presence among us. Saint Francis had come to believe that both the earth and his body—through the incarnation of Christ—had become profoundly good, as his canticle describes:

Saint Francis often said to his followers, “What a man is before God, that he is and no more.” With great humility, Francis had often applied these words to himself.

As many of us know, when Francis lay there on the bare earth, he was bearing on his body the stigmata—the brand marks of Christ's wounds. These sacred marks remind us of how closely Francis had become identified with Christ. He was also filled with awe because of Christ's overflowing love: As we read in John 15:13, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.”⁷

Human Brotherhood

The cause of all our problems, tensions, worries and confusions started with the fall of Adam and Eve, because of selfishness and pride. This tendency of human beings prevails even today due to spiritual blindness, worldly motivated value systems, and the attitude of ‘I and I alone.’ Human values are corrupted by egoism, leading to the virus of the “I” sickness. Human Brotherhood goes against this attitude of ‘I am right, you are wrong,’ to make human beings consider all as equal. Human Brotherhood is also to go against the human tendency of being and having more. It is also trying to control the human tendency to be distinguished or elevated above all others and to make oneself feel good about them.

Human brotherhood becomes authentically human only when the brothers, in their loving and serving, are broken for their fellow human beings. It begins with considering everyone a “significant other” and

becoming really human in the presence of the other, It is natural for human beings to long for acceptance and love from others. Genuine love and acceptance is obtained when they consider the other as a source of wealth.

It is the other who encourages, appreciates and helps the brothers to enjoy life. The “significant other” is a person with whom they can share their thoughts, feelings and emotions and thus grow. The greater the “significant other”, the greater will be the capacity to grow in human brotherhood. When they open their hearts and minds to the other, their love and respect for one another increases, leading to a gift of fellowship. They can pour out their heartfelt love to build a human brotherhood of relationships and be enriched by genuine love for one another.

God created all human beings on the same level and loves each of them. So one person cannot be more important or valuable than another. A brother need not have a title to make himself feel valuable, as God has already established his value as a human person. Being a child of God is the highest position imaginable. No human title can begin to compare with this reality of being a child of God.

All special titles and human recognition are ultimately worthless. They may have some value here on earth, but it is only temporal. At times human organizations seem to exalt some people, but it is for the functioning of society or the organisation. We should not consider only some people as important and not others. This kind of attitude or feeling might divide human brotherhood and build walls around them, leading to hatred deep within some of them. Unhealthy pride might goad them to closed relationships, refusing to accept others as they are; not to respect others as our brothers and sisters. It is only by understanding that the human person is the image of God that the brothers can respect and love humanity. For those who understand human brotherhood, all human beings are considered brothers and sisters. It is by loving and serving human beings that they love and serve God, the author of human beings. In this regard the famous Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore in his well-known book *Geetanjali* tells about feeling the presence of God in the ordinary activities of human beings:

Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads! Whom dost

thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut?

Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee! He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path-maker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower and His garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like Him come down on the dusty soil! Deliverance? Where is this deliverance to be found? Our Master Himself has joyfully taken upon Him the bonds of creation: He is bound with us all forever. Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense! What harm is there if thy clothes become tattered and stained? Meet Him and stand by Him in toil and in sweat of thy brow.⁸

Tagore tells the brothers to go beyond the four walls of their shrines to meet God in human beings. God lives with the humble and poor people of this world. He lives with those who work hard to support their families. If they want to worship God, they do it in the temple and then go out to meet humanity in the world. Tagore thus glorifies the life of the humble human being and discourages the ascetic way of life at the cost of human brotherhood. Blessed Alberione wrote to his spiritual sons and daughters a booklet titled *Via Humanitatis* about the journey of human beings towards God. He outlines the history of God's presence in the world and in human beings from the time of creation.⁹

Christian Brotherhood

Christian Brotherhood is Christification of human brotherhood. All the good activities of the Brothers are done in the name of Jesus Christ. In its introduction to "Fraternal Life in Community", the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life states in this regard, "The love of Christ has gathered a great number of disciples to become one, so that, like Him and thanks to Him, in the Spirit, they might throughout the centuries be able to respond to the love of the Father, loving Him "with all their heart, with all their soul, with all their might" (cf Deut 6:5) and loving their neighbour "as themselves" (cf Mt 22:39).

The lived experience of Jesus Christ keep

s them united with one another in the community. Their community becomes a community of brotherhood in Jesus Christ. During His life here on Earth, Jesus lived this universal and human brotherhood and proclaimed Himself as a Brother to His disciples. A very clear proof of this statement is found in the Gospel of Matthew, where Jesus says to Mary Magdalene: "Go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'" (Jn 20:17). The depth of Christian Brotherhood emerges in this statement of Jesus that the brotherhood of the disciples among one another and with Christ is closely connected with the Fatherhood of God.

In this regard, the document released by the Vatican's Congregation states that Jesus is a Brother to His disciples by saying, "Jesus Christ first of all became a brother, shared our flesh and blood, and was in solidarity with the sufferings of His brothers and sisters."

The Brother develops his baptismal priesthood through brotherhood," the document states. "Through it he becomes a bridge between God and his brothers, anointed and sent by the Spirit to bring the Good News of the love and mercy of God to all, especially to the least of his brothers, the weakest members of humanity.¹⁰

Imitating the example of their Lord and Master, the early Christians tried to live out this brotherhood. "They were united in one mind and heart" (Acts 2:42-45). There were no power structures that created inequality or subordination in the community, as they were pursued by the words of Jesus, "Don't let anyone call you 'Rabbi,' for you have only one teacher, and all of you are equal as brothers. And don't address anyone here on earth as 'Father,' for only God in Heaven is your Father. And don't let anyone call you 'Teacher,' for you have only one teacher, the Messiah. The greatest among you must be a servant (Mt 23:8-11).

The disciples, faithful to the words of Jesus, did not allow themselves to be called Father, since the cult of the title Father obscures the uniqueness of God as Abba and thus, in the process, distorts the quality of brothers in the community. Therefore each member of the community was called "Brother", as this term is a symbol of love to promote an awareness of our response to the call of God to love and serve one

another. This title represents a significant way of being in the ecclesial community, in which he is the prophetic memory of Jesus-Brother, who told His followers: "And you are all brothers."¹¹ (Mt 23:8)

Pope Francis encourages all Brothers to live the Gospel message in a prophetic way with respect to the charism and tradition of their particular institute. To be brothers of Christ, it is needed to be conformed to Christ in doing His Will, as declared in the Gospel of Mark: "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother" (Mk 3:32-35).

In this community of Brothers there were only doers of the Will of God. The worth of a person was judged purely by the standard of obedience to the Will of God and not by the distinction of hierarchical position or caste or gender. The community of the Brothers of Jesus consists of members who are equals; all of them have equal rights and duties although they have different functions. In this regard Pope Francis urges:

There indeed we find true healing, since the way to relate to others which truly heals, instead of debilitating us, is a *mystical* fraternity, a contemplative fraternity. It is a fraternal love capable of seeing the sacred grandeur of our neighbour, of finding God in every human being, of tolerating the irritants of life in common by clinging to the love of God, of opening the heart to divine love and seeking the happiness of others just as their heavenly Father does. Here and now, especially where we are a "little flock" (Lk 12:32), the Lord's disciples are called to live as a community which is the salt of the earth and the light of the world (cf Mt 5:13-16). We are called to bear witness to a constantly new way of living together in fidelity to the Gospel.¹²

This petition of Pope Francis highlights the Christian Brotherhood as a pearl that Brothers cultivate with "a special form of sharing in Christ's prophetic office, which the Holy Spirit communicates to the whole People of God" (VC 84)

Religious Brotherhood

The Religious Brotherhood emerged as a witness to this Christian

brotherhood in the Church. It is a specific and radical calling to live the Christian Brotherhood. This gift is not for all, but only for those to whom it has been given. As Jesus says, “Not everyone can accept this saying, but only those it has been given to. The one who can accept this should accept it” (Mt 19:12).

This radical and prophetic calling of Jesus involves great sacrifices from the Brothers such as total detachment from all the world gives: They also must sacrifice even the spiritual worldliness of honour, respect and so on. In this regard Pope Francis states, “In contrast to spiritual worldliness; a hazardous trap of the devil, the Religious Brotherhood has blossomed as the prophetic memory of Jesus-Brother, who told His followers: *And you are all brothers.*”¹³ (Mt 23:8)

As the Brothers, by submitting themselves totally to Christ, give up all that the world offers and take on whatever mission they are directed to, their sacrifice becomes a means of spiritual growth because of their adherence to the way of life of Jesus. Their life of prayer strengthens their fraternity with the other members of their community to grow in deep communion with God. They help each other and become means to one another’s holiness. Brothers see themselves as part of a *brotherhood* that advances God’s kingdom, rather than as isolated missionaries. Their community becomes a spiritual family by their life of togetherness in their prayer and work. In this regard, the apostolic exhortation of *Vita Consecrata* states:

Religious Brotherhood is a brotherhood of willingness to serve the Lord and His people by being part of them. Being part of this people and its mission, the Religious Brothers ‘are valued for what they are, come together in ecclesial communion in a more convinced manner, ready to undertake the great universal mission’.¹⁴ Thus the Brothers make more visible the communion that all God’s people are called to embody with total detachment of heart, mind and will. As Jesus says, “Be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48).

Religious Brothers find their natural habitat in this context of communion by way of belonging to the People of God, and they are also united with all those who, by religious consecration, reflect the essence of the Church, the mystery of communion. In this they keep alive the obligation

of brotherhood as a confession of the Trinity.¹⁵

At the root of a Brother's vocation lies a profound experience of solidarity that essentially matches that of Moses before the burning bush: he discovers himself as the eyes, ears and heart of God, the God who sees the oppression of His people, who hears their cry, feels their anguish, and comes down to liberate them. In this intimate experience, the Brother hears the call: "Come, I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people out of Egypt" (cf Ex 3:7-10). Therefore, the dimension of communion is closely linked in the Brother to a fine sensitivity for everything that affects the least privileged of people; those oppressed by various forms of injustice, abandoned on the margins of history and progress; those who ultimately are less likely to experience the Good News of God's love in their lives.¹⁶

The Vocation of the Brother is not only intended to be that of a recipient of God's love, but also of being a witness and mediator of that same gift of the project of communion that God has for humanity and which is based in the Trinitarian communion. This project, the Mystery which has been revealed to us in Christ, seeks to establish a horizontal relationship between God and humankind at the very heart of humanity, precisely where God wants to be present. Relationships of affiliation are thus transformed simultaneously into brotherly relationships. For that reason, saying "Brother" is like saying "mediator of God's love", the God who "so loved the world that He gave His only Son so that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life" (Jn 3:16)¹⁷

The Pauline Brotherhood

The Pauline Brotherhood is to live in the Divine Master, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and to preach the Gospel through modern means of communication along the pattern of the way Saint Paul lived and responded to his call by living and preaching the Gospel. Being disciples of Jesus and imitating Saint Paul as their patron, the Pauline Brothers are called to live like Jesus and "get involved in the spread of the Message of Salvation by means of the media of Social Communication as well as in the formation of people to the right use of the same media."¹⁸ Like Saint

Paul, they actualize it in their daily life of commitment, so as to say together with Saint Paul, “For me to live is Christ” (Gal 2:20). In this regard the Documents of the Special General Chapter state: “In 1924 was formed the first group of Brothers who, in the congregation, have assumed the name of Disciples of the Divine Master.”¹⁹

The Pauline Brothers, consecrated and grafted through Baptism to Christ, “the first born of many brothers” (Rom 8:29), and docile to the teaching of the Gospel, avoid the title “Rabbi” as they are considered to be disciples of and learners from Christ. As Christ criticised Jewish leaders “who love the place of honour at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues, and salutations in the marketplace, and being called ‘rabbi’ by men” (Mt 23:6–7), He wants the Brothers to be humble but be treated as equals with all the members of the Pauline Family.

In this regard, Alberione states: “All the members of the Pious Society of Saint Paul profess the same religious life, aim at the same apostolic end, are guided by the same constitutions, share the same spiritual and material goods, and enjoy the same rights.”²⁰ They are called by God to communicate to humanity the fullness of the mystery of Christ with their lived experience of the whole Christ (Master, Way, Truth and Life). Through the Word and the Eucharist the Brothers are nourished in Christ, and in Him their prayer, ministry, consecration and brotherhood find unity, producing a total living synthesis in love. Devotion to Jesus the Master leads to perfect worship of God; the more the Pauline Brothers live it, the more they resemble Jesus Christ.

To actualize this reality in their life, the Brothers are faithful to their prayer life and imitate Saint Paul, their patron of humility, who says, “To me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given” (Eph 3:8). Graced by the Spirit of God, they live a simple life of fraternity like that of Jesus Christ, who “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, coming in human likeness... He humbled himself, being obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted him to the highest place” (Phil 2:7-9).

The greatest person is the one who, unknown to the world, serves others the most. Hence the Pauline Brothers are not well-known to the world but, hidden within the four walls of their community, live in fraternity by

loving one another with brotherly affection and experiencing Jesus Christ in the community. In fact, they believe in the words of Jesus: “For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them” (Mt 18:20), and experience Jesus in their community that is formed in His name. They then express this experience of Jesus to the world by working in their apostolic sectors which are considered to be the pulpit for them to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ. “They do not look at offices, duties and assignments to which each is called as source of privileges or of dominion (cf 1 Pet 5:13; Mt 24:49), but as a mission of service to be accomplished for the benefit of others following the example of Christ who ‘has come, not to be served by others, but to serve’” (Mt 20:28)²¹

Their status is not measured by their title or office of honour so as to attract friends and well-wishers. Instead, their greatness is determined solely by how they are faithful to their commitment of service. This is what makes them the greatest in the eyes of God. The more they humble themselves, the more is their greatness.

As Jesus called His disciples and lived with them during His life in Galilee, the Pauline Brothers are called to live with Jesus in community. Then, as He took them to Jerusalem where He suffered and died for all people, the Brothers too are asked to climb the mount of Calvary to be crucified with Him on the Cross of their committed life. This is done by accepting their daily sufferings for the sake of their Brothers on the cross of their community life. The three nails symbolize their three vows: poverty, chastity and obedience.

While Jesus walked to Jerusalem, He told the disciples that He would be handed over to sinners and be crucified; further, He told them, “Whoever wants to be My disciples must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Me” (Mt 16:24). Hearing all these sayings of Jesus about His death on the cross, and the cross that His followers would have to take up, the apostles felt very sad. They were somewhat disappointed at having to follow Jesus on that way of suffering and death. As Jesus wanted to strengthen their vocation to follow Him so that they would experience the glory of the resurrection after their suffering, He showed them the transfiguration event as a foretaste of that glory.

In the same way, when the Pauline Brothers feel lonely, humiliated,

hopeless, etc., the Lord will show them the glory of His transfiguration as reward for their crucifixion. To see this Transfiguration event in their life they must accept their daily disfiguration by way of living and doing their apostolate. In the life of Jesus, the cross was the medium of His disfiguration. To be configured with Jesus, with the three nails of humility, detachment and charity on the cross of their community life, disfiguration is a must for the Brothers. If they are faithful to the end, in fact, they will experience the transfiguration event in their very community!

What they have to do is to continue renewing or assessing the determination in their commitment to Jesus. They have to persevere in their simplicity and humility and, if they fail, make the effort to die to their pride and egoistic tendencies and attractions towards spiritual worldliness. They must be free from the clutches of attachment of worldly things, so much so as not to be possessed by them.

Whenever their commitment disfigures them; when they face difficulties in fighting with their ego and pride; attachment to all kinds of comforts that the world gives, they ought to turn to Jesus in prayer. When they focus upon God in contemplative prayer, in the silence of their hearts God will purify their souls and liberate them from the clutches of all sorts of attachments. They will find that their vocation to the Pauline Brotherhood is passing through three stages: of disfiguration with Jesus, configuration with Jesus and transfiguration with Jesus.

Chapter – 2

A LUMINOUS HISTORY OF PAULINE BROTHERHOOD

The present state of the fraternity of the Pauline Brotherhood highlights a luminous and charismatic history originating in the light of Jesus Christ, who said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (Jn 8:12). Focusing on this light, the Founder of the Pauline Family heard a call from Jesus, saying to him, “From here I want to enlighten you.” In other words, “I am your light and I will use you in order to enlighten; I am giving you this mission and I want you to carry it out.”²²

The Backbone of the Society of St Paul

History shows how this charismatic Pauline Family was born and perpetuated through its backbone of the Brothers, whom Blessed Alberione addressed as “Disciples of the Divine Master” saying, “The Disciples are as dear as the backbone of the Congregation; from them I hope for saints; faithful servants of the Heavenly Father, repairers of the offences that are done to Jesus the Master, rich in grace and the Holy Spirit.”²³

Though Alberione had an ardent desire to be an ordained priest, his love for the Brothers was no less, as he linked the life of the Priests and Brothers, intimately uniting them as one body and one spirit in the same apostolate. He used to love and appreciate the Brothers saying, “The work of the Brother uplifts his activity, makes it joyful, and increases it. God is glorified, the Gospel is proclaimed and people are enlightened.”²⁴

Past, Present and Future of the Disciples

Motivated by the climate of the Pauline Vocation Year 2019, in order “to rekindle the gift of God” that the Pauline Brothers have received, Brother Luigi Bofelli ssp has posed some of the following questions in his article in the Dialogue Column of their website paulus.net:

- What sense does the presence of the Disciples of the Divine Master have today in the Society of Saint Paul and in the

Pauline Family?

- Do the younger generations of Paulines know who these Brothers are?
- What vocational attraction can they exercise on them?
- Are the Brothers perhaps a remnant of the past, or can we hope for the rebirth of this vocation which the Founder loved to call "*The backbone of the Society of Saint Paul*"?

Certainly it poses an uneasy atmosphere of problems today in front of this series of doubts, so I would like to launch an anchor of salvation and give back hope and meaning in favour of this vocation. When Alberione insisted on the way of life of the Brothers, asking them to *live in a greater silence, almost a little secluded; to live in recollection awaiting their things, in simplicity, yet in docility, and always ready for what the Lord disposes ...* (Alberione, *Meditation*, 3-4-1962), he intended to insert people, in the context of the Pauline community, who are able to live the essentiality of the consecrated life, free from *spiritual worldliness, which consists in seeking, in place of the glory of the Lord, human glory and personal well-being* (Pope Francis, *EG* 93). But is this not perhaps the need and the challenge for our time?

The Founder knew very well that in the *Pauline body* it was necessary to introduce a special group of people called to be witnesses to a specific need of our mission: to be first of all *disciples* of the One we wish to announce. It is true that every Pauline, if he wants to be an apostle, must first put himself in the school of the Master, but it is also necessary for some to live this gift with more intensity, as a witnessing and "memory" for all. This was precisely the "strategy" of the Founder: the various components of the Pauline Family are distinguished by particular charismatic gifts, but they do not have them exclusively, they must only be witnesses and "memory" because all the others live that same gift. Therefore, it will be easier to discover the richness and the actuality of the vocation of the Brothers if one discovers the mystical dynamic that animates them.²⁵

Trust in Providence

As I am called to be one of these disciples of the Divine Master, I have no answer to justify these queries except to follow the principles and

guidelines given by the Founder himself. It is to put all our trust in Providence as Alberione himself did to overcome all the difficulties he met with during each crisis in his life. Thinking of Blessed Alberione, what I recall is that the light that changed his life was the same light that dispelled the darkness of his many crises. It is the same light that illumines the darkness of the modern world. It is the same light that made him the marvel of our times. It is the same light that made him the Founder of the marvellous Pauline Family and it is the same light that has called numerous Brothers to communicate the Word of God through the media of Social Communication. It was through this same light from the sacred Host that his vision was made into a project and it was through this same light that the project took form and became an unstoppable enterprise of media evangelisation.

Early Childhood of Alberione

The enterprising initiative of the Blessed Founder of the Pauline Family has an enriching historical background. It begins with his own earthly life in an unknown village of northern Italy known as San Lorenzo di Fossano. Even as he saw the light for the first time on the morning of 4 April 1884, he seemed called by God to be a light to the ignorance of darkness in the world. The little boy James knew he would be called to become a priest of the media apostolate and that a farmer's life was not for him. He would often hear his father calling, "James, come and work in the fields like the rest of us." So little James, youngest of the five sons of his humble farming parents, each of great faith, would go out into the fields in autumn in the first hours of the night, holding still the little lamp that illumined only a few yards to give light to his brothers working in the fields. Tired and sleepy, trying hard to keep awake, he would often turn around, leaving them in the dark and then, hearing his mother crying out, "James, give them light; give them light, James," again hold the light aloft for them. His mother did not imagine that this would be precisely the mission entrusted to her child, viz. to illumine the world with the light of the Word of God by use of the media of social communication.

As he was just the poor little son of a farmer, frail, weak and sick even at his birth, his parents, Michele Alberione and Teresa Rosa Allocco, fearing for his survival, decided to have him baptized the day after his birth. From them he received early education for an honest and industrious life and a

strong, deep, coherent faith, which he would always consider as the grace of God.

The Light that was Lost

At the age of six he began attending the local school in Cherasco, where the family had to move in February 1887. His teacher asked what he would like to do when he grew up. “I want to be a priest,” he replied promptly. His determination showed itself in the following years and helped him to direct everything to such a goal. Later on he would say that it was the first bright light in his future vocation.²⁶

Seminary life, which he entered to love and serve the Lord, to whom he had made a vow, unfortunately ended in deep crisis as reading was his obsession and caused his termination from the seminary. Where would he go now, as his light had seemingly been lost, leaving him in the dark? Was it owing to his appetite for reading literature? The light that brought him into this world to do great things for the modern generation seemed lost when he left the seminary and returned home. The crisis may have been caused by certain books passed to him under the desk by some classmates, but it was a providential trial to him, which was to have a positive effect on the future apostle of the media of social communication.²⁷

The Light that was Returned

The light that seemed to be lost when Alberione left the seminary came back to him during his hours of prayer and repentance on the night of 31 December 1900, as he knelt before the Blessed Sacrament in quiet, persistent adoration after he had reentered the seminary of Alba. It happened in a way that His ways are known to be – always mysterious to us, but to him it was unmistakably clear. As he states:

A special light came from the Blessed Sacrament, a greater insight of the invitation extended by Jesus: “Come to Me all of you...”, “I seemed to understand the heart of the great Pope (Leo XIII); the call sent out by the Church; the true mission of a priest. It seemed clear to me what Toniolo had said regarding the duty of being apostles of the times, using the means exploited by adversaries. I felt deeply obliged to prepare myself to do something for God and the men of the new century in which I would live. I had a sufficiently clear awareness of my nothingness and at the

same time I heard: 'I will be with you until the consummation of the world,' in the Eucharist; I felt that in Jesus' Host I could find light, nourishment, comfort and victory over evil. As I thought about the future, it seemed to me that in this century generous souls would feel what I had felt; and that when organised, they would achieve what Toniolo strongly urged: 'Unite! If the enemy finds us alone, he will overcome us one by one!'"²⁸

Some fellow seminarians had already shared their thinking with him as he with them, all drawing light from the tabernacle. His prayer would last four hours after a solemn High Mass. He prayed for the new century to be born in the Eucharistic Christ; that new apostles would regenerate laws, schools, literature, the press, customs; that in the Church there would be a new missionary thrust; that the new means of apostolate would be used well; that society would accept the teachings of Pope Leo XIII's great encyclicals. The latter had been explained to the seminarians by Canon Chiesa (instructor and spiritual director), especially with regard to social questions and the liberty of the Church. He further says, "The Eucharist, the Gospel, the Pope, the new century... the need for a new army of apostles—these things were so deeply impressed on my mind and heart that later they would always dominate my thoughts, prayers, interior work and inspirations. I felt obliged to serve the Church and the men of the new century, and to work with others.... This idea, at first very confusing, clarified itself. With the passing of the years, it even became concrete."²⁹

The Light Became a Family

He felt himself in duty bound to prepare to do something for the Lord and the people of the new century with whom he would live. This thought continued to exercise his mind; he imagined himself surrounded by young enthusiastic brothers who would work with him. After ordination and parish activities and even while he was spiritual director of the Alba seminarians, his imagination continued and turned into a dream. His dream was actualised when the Bishop of Alba appointed him editor of *Gazzetta D'Alba*, through which the Spirit of the Lord led him to open a small printing school with two young Brothers and a printing machine. It is unbelievable that his thought and imagination led him to start the first printing press way back in 1914; by then it was fourteen years since that eventful night. He was ordained a priest at the tender age of 25 and

appointed Spiritual Director to the young seminarians. But deep within him he was feeling that God was calling him to fight the press with press – a thought that nagged him at the time, there being much negative information disseminated to the masses through the rapidly expanding media. He felt he required an organisation of writers, technicians and propagandists who would offer their minds and hearts to work for a good press. So, step by step, he was led to his goal. We see the hand of God at every stage: his appointment as Director of *Gazzetta D'Alba*, permission by the good Bishop Re to buy a printing press, etc. Though it was small and only two boys were working with him, it was the birth of the Pauline Family and the foundation of the Society of Saint Paul for the Media Apostolate. From that moment on, the young Alberione concentrated more on the weekly paper and began forming the young Brothers who came to adhere to his apostolic ideal for the new mission.³⁰

With the Lord he made a pact to leave everything, to act with full conviction. Day by day, step by step, the Lord guided him in his project to fight the socialism and communalism that were knocking at his door. He trusted in God as his loving Father who sent Jesus to this world to give His life for the world. Blessed Alberione knew it was not easy to do so by his own ability but, with Jesus' help, he would take the Light of God's Word all over the world to dispel from people's life the darkness of ignorance of the True God. He also determined to tell them of Jesus Christ, the True Light, showing us the right path to the Father as the Way, the Truth and the Life.

It is clear that the way of Blessed Alberione was led by Jesus the Way as a result of his deep faith in the providence of God. With the help of the disciples who followed him, he could allow the Spirit of the Lord to expand the Pauline Family within such a short time all over the world.

Blessed Timothy Giaccardo

One of these young disciples was Blessed Timothy Giaccardo, who thus defined the disciples of the Divine Master: *They are the signum (sign) of devotion to the Divine Master and they are also the embodiment ... They are the Heart of the House; to hit them is to hit the heart, to neglect them is to neglect the body* (Timothy Giaccardo, Q27 TG, 7-7-46).

Blessed Joseph Timothy Giaccardo was the first priest of the Society of

Saint Paul. Born on 13 June 1896, at Narzole D'Alba in Italy, at the young age of 12 years, Joseph Timothy Giaccardo had his first encounter with Father Alberione. Assisting the pastor of Giaccardo's parish, Father Alberione was impressed by the young boy's docility, devotion to the sacraments and spirit of prayer when he heard his first confession. Aware of his desire to become a priest, in October of 1908, Father Alberione invited Joseph to accompany him to the seminary. On 4 September 1917, while still a seminarian, Giaccardo joined the Society of Saint Paul and, two years later on 19 October 1919, he was ordained a priest. Soon after, Giaccardo was nominated as the vice-superior and treasurer of the Pious Society of Saint Paul.

Venerable Maggiorino Vigolungo

Another in this first group of brothers was Venerable Maggiorino Vigolungo, who died on 27 July 1918. He was a simple and humble disciple of the Divine Master, graciously aiming for sanctity of life. The secret of so much vitality is found in the contagious faith of Alberione which he passed on to his young brothers.

The difficulties of every kind were almost incredible. On the night of Christmas 1918, fire greatly damaged the printing press. The young Brothers worked the whole day to save something, and one of them expressed dismay; but the Founder serenely replied: "It is less serious than a venial sin." He received threats from the socialists of Alba. Alberione did not lose hope but courageously protected the Brothers with prayers to drive out sin and every negligence against poverty.

The life of the *brothers* and *sisters* was quite hard as the work was ample and heavy but the meals were meagre; during cold days the only heating available was to work, run and jump. Their classes were held in the kitchen, in the dormitory, and in the corridor during the morning or evening hours. At times Alberione himself cooked for his brothers and sisters. Sweetly but strongly he led them to holiness and love. All of them felt his fatherly love and lived their life industriously and with a sense of duty. They were growing in holiness with the practice of virtues like serenity, joy, and faith, enlightened by the great mission of the good press.³¹

Alberione an Inspiration

Alberione inspired the brothers with the noble work of the apostolate, showing much paternal affection, patience and understanding. Thus he formed them to become men who would be free, well-balanced and mature, and thus might enter into ever more intimate union with God and with their brethren; at their service but, above all, in order that they might be saints: “To be saints, it is necessary to be strong.” He could ask for sacrifices and youthful nature which, when healthy, is more capable than any other of enthusiasm and sacrifice, responded to with joyful generosity. He would say to them: “I want to give you a gift.” The gift was none other than to ask them to get up at 4:30 in the morning instead of at 5:00. And the youthful followers were grateful to him for this. They revered him and they loved him.

Dubious Story of Alberione

He inspired the young men with his humility, detachment from self, persons, wealth, and, in a certain sense, even with his work, recognising it as the work of God, and feared to hinder or harm it with his insufficiencies, his lack of correspondence and his faults. Later, he wrote in his autobiography: “He would have to recount a twofold story; first, the story of God’s mercy, so as to sing a marvellous ‘Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people of good-will,’ then the humbling story of his lack of conformity to the overabundance of divine love.”³² The second story led him to a profound conviction that became his fervent entreaty. It is that everyone must regard Saint Paul the Apostle alone as father, teacher, exemplar and founder. In fact, the Pauline Family was born through him; it was he who nursed it and raised it; its spirit is from him.³³

Models of Sanctity for the Brothers

In reflecting on the lives of the Brothers in the Pauline Family, their Founder points to the lives of a few great exemplars whose spiritual practices and apostolate provide excellent models for them to imitate, like Saint Joseph, Saint Paul, Andrea Borello etc., telling them, “I have only two concerns: that I’m not yet good enough, and that you’re not yet holy enough. These two things are my only ‘worries.’ I have no others; all the rest is nothing and comes of itself.”³⁴

Daily he prayed the words of Jesus: “I sanctify myself for them that they may be sanctified in truth.” The first concern of the Brothers of the

Pauline Family is holiness of life and the second is holiness of doctrine. His incessant prayer was heard; he was given the grace of initiating brothers like Blessed Timothy Giaccardo and Maggiorino Vigolungo, who at the age of fourteen offered his life for the apostolate of the editions, and Andrew Borello, who died at the age of thirty two, after fifteen years of Pauline life.

Saint Joseph

Blessed Alberione had a special liking for Saint Joseph, especially for the Brothers. Though Saint Joseph was invoked as the patron of the Universal Church, of fathers, of carpenters, social justice and a patron of the dying, Blessed Alberione also designated him as Patron of the Pauline Brothers. He revered him as an exemplary model of all virtues. Writing to his disciples, he says,

It is difficult to describe the graces and consolations I have had during the spiritual exercises of the disciples in preparation for the feast of Saint Joseph. How can I thank him worthily? It is possible only with a generous and joyful correspondence, loyalty to the intentions and professions issued. How good you have been! Days that were prepared by the goodness and kindness of God towards His sons; and you are among the best sons of this good Father. We also intend to remember the great good already done by older disciples, their generosity, their loyalty. Everything is known to me, you have repeated to me: "Among the Disciples there are truly beautiful souls!"³⁵

A Symbol of Simplicity and Humility

The Pauline Brothers are to meditate on this great Saint's virtues of simplicity, humility, detachment and love for the Holy Family of Nazareth and apply them to their own hidden life. It is also necessary for the Brothers to do their apostolate of the press and to be good and genuine followers of Christ by imitating this great saint.

Though he is a great saint, the Bible gives only a little knowledge about him. Alberione discovered the hidden qualities of nobility in this saint who was a symbol of humility. He saw him as a saint who served Mary and Jesus in acts of selfless love and was also a teacher to Jesus, the Word Incarnate. Alberione also found him to be a worker with wood, teaching

Jesus to work with wood, leading Him ultimately to embrace the wood of the Cross which became the altar of His Sacrifice. Alberione's discovery led him to make Saint Joseph the patron of simplicity and hard work for the Brothers.

Devotion to Saint Joseph

Blessed Alberione's devotion to this Saint was so great that he introduced a special monthly devotion to the Pauline Family in his honour as the most chaste spouse of the Mother of God and as the heavenly Patron of the Universal Church. It rekindles a sincere and authentic devotion to Saint Joseph, inviting the Pauline Family to be faithful to this devotion every month. Saint Joseph, together with Mary, is the perfect example to imitate for doing the will of God in their lives.

Saint Joseph did not set out in search of glory and renown, yet he was chosen for a more glorious role than he could ever have imagined. He was looking for a wife, not the Mother of God, when he met Mary. When the angel warned him in a dream, he was simply looking to get some rest, not to hold the fate of the world's salvation in his hands. He was the rock of Mary and the shield of the Child Jesus, a model of fortitude and faith. Despite the gravity of his duties, Saint Joseph never assumed airs of self-importance or vanity. He never grew puffed up at the honour or responsibility; he simply responded with holy wonder and perfect obedience.

Even in death Saint Joseph appears to have retained his humility. He was entrusted with the protection of the Son of God, and yet he is hardly mentioned in Scripture. We do not know of his death except by his absence at the foot of the Cross when Christ gives His mother, Mary, into the protection of Saint John. Tradition indicates that he died before Christ's public ministry began.

Indeed, he left behind little trace of himself. Yet while he wrote no grand treatise on the Blessed Trinity, he held the Second Person of that Trinity in his arms; and in his final moments, the Son of God must have held Saint Joseph as he breathed his last. What more could anyone ask for than to die surrounded by one's loved ones, indeed, by the Source of Love Himself? Could there be anything more comforting or more glorious?!

Saint Joseph, Model of Obedience

Saint Joseph is a model of obedience, humility, selflessness and courage through the love he showed Mary and Jesus. If we can emulate Saint Joseph even a little each day, we will be that much closer to becoming the men we are called to be.

The Gospel text throws a little more light on Saint Joseph as patron of social justice. It says that Mary and Joseph were engaged and thus legally considered husband and wife. A misunderstanding of Mary's pregnancy tortures the mind of Joseph, which could have led him to dissolve their union by divorce or death.

Saint Joseph, Model of Righteousness

As a law-abiding Jew, Joseph was supposed to keep the Law of Moses and could have merited the title of righteous or just man by exposing Mary to public disgrace, but he went against the Law of Moses. Social Justice demands the spirit of the law and not the letter of the law. Joseph was righteous or just because of his charitable, loving and selfless act by refraining from going by the letter of the law and instead highlighting its spirit. He loved Mary above himself, and his behaviour was called "just" in the Scriptures as a result of his selfless love. He had no disordered attachments to the things or titles of this world.

This incident invites the Brothers to reflect on two significant points. First, many Brothers in their community have the dilemma of doing a thing supposedly right which might not always be the loving thing. By following only the letter of the law in their observance of duties, rules and regulations, they may be doing the right thing but not the most loving thing.

Imitating Saint Joseph leads them to focus every time on doing the most loving thing instead of just doing the right thing. Though Joseph could have done the right thing according to the law, and put Mary to shame publicly, he decided to go beyond the letter of the law and do the most loving thing in the circumstances, which in this case was also the right thing.

Saint Joseph, Model of Charity

Two significant points of charity and humility can be drawn from the noble quality of detachment in the spirit of Saint Joseph and the spirit of Pauline Brotherhood. The idea of the Founder can be updated today according to

the signs of times, especially the reflection of being crucified with Christ with the three nails of the evangelical counsels. Today one may well interpret them in terms of replacing obedience with the humility of Saint Joseph; poverty with his sense of detachment, and chastity with the profoundness of his charity.

Saint Joseph, Model for the Pauline Brother

The spirit of Saint Joseph, applied to the spirit of the Pauline brotherhood, calls for a total disfiguration of oneself with the three nails of humility, detachment and charity. This disfiguration will lead to transfiguration and finally configuration with Christ.

Blessed Alberione wanted his Brother disciples to imitate Saint Joseph and become brothers to one another; to be disfigured on the cross of their Religious Life with the three nails of humility, detachment and charity. This calls for an integrated life of Brotherhood, i.e., not something that they have but something that pertains to being. This inherent being is to ascend the Divine Mount of Brotherliness step by step –from universal brotherhood to human brotherhood; from human brotherhood to Christian Brotherhood; from Christian Brotherhood to Religious Brotherhood and from Religious Brotherhood to Pauline Brotherhood.

In other words, the Pauline Brotherhood per se begins by respecting and loving the creation of God and then moves on to ascending the mount of Calvary by breaking themselves for the other; keeping in mind that they become authentically human in the presence of the other; considering the person sitting next to them as not a potential threat but a source of wealth as a brother, a symbol of God's love for them with whom they share their thoughts, feelings and emotions, and grow towards Pauline Brotherhood.

Andrea Maria Borello

Another son of the Pious Society of Saint Paul was Andrea Maria Borello, who is heading towards beatification, that is, official recognition on earth of his spiritual and apostolic merits, in his case in the field of Social Communication.

“Riccardo” was born on 8 March 1916 in Mango, near Alba (Cuneo), of Giuseppe Stanislao Borello and Margherita Paolina Rivella. Within a few weeks of his birth he was orphaned, his father having died in combat in the course of the First World War. When he reached the age of nine his

mother was remarried to a farmer of Castagnole Lanze. At the start of 1933, in the space of a week, he lost his mother and stepfather and was adopted by the Perrone family. He spent his youth in prayer and work, accepting Saint Joseph as his model.

Having served with enthusiasm in the ranks of Catholic Action, on 8 July 1936, at the age of twenty, he entered the Society of Saint Paul as an aspiring Disciple of the Divine Master. After reading the life of Maggiorino Vigolungo and making a retreat, he opted to be a Pauline Brother. Riccardo left an indelible impression on his companions. One recalls: "Although he is older than us by a few years, he greeted us with great cordiality and charming smiles. In a very short time he won all of us."

In his desire to give, through his life, the greatest glory to God and good to men, Riccardo consecrated himself totally to the apostolate of the editions. In the Society of Saint Paul, all young Brothers had to work from the moment they joined. Riccardo used to work in the garden and in the paper mill. Don Timothy Giaccardo, as the superior of the house, asked him also to work as a cobbler. He accepted willingly, saying to himself that Jesus Himself had worked for twenty years as a carpenter and even Saint Joseph, Mary and Saint Paul had been workers.

Remaining a shoemaker all his life, accustomed as he was to giving rather than receiving, he never deemed it a demeaning job or burden, considering all work as "apostolate" for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. He always collaborated with the Pauline priests in the work of evangelisation in the most humble ways, using the means of social communication. On 7 April 1938, he consecrated himself to the Lord in the presence of Don James Alberione, taking the name 'Andrea Maria'.

Andrea was always charitable and attentive to the needs of others. In his great love for his vocation and for the Congregation, he made a special offering of his life in sacrifice to God for the grace of perseverance for the consecrated, so that all those who would be called might be faithful to the spirit of their vocation.

He made his perpetual vows on 20 March 1944. Four years later, on 4 September 1948, at the age of only 32 years, being struck by tuberculosis, he died in the nursing home which the Institute had then in Sanfré (Cuneo). The doctor treating him said he died with a smile on his

lips and his eyes wide open, gazing at the picture of the Madonna that hung before his bed. Born in humble surroundings, orphaned within a few months of his birth, having had a troubled adolescence with little secular education and a series of bereavements and transfers, he was extolled by the founder himself thus: "By general consent, Brother Andrea Maria Borello merits to be glorified and proposed as an example for all those who consecrate themselves to the apostolate of the means of social communication, but in a particular way for the Brothers, Disciples of the Pious Society of Saint Paul, who are like the backbone of the Congregation and play an important part in the apostolate of the editions." Andrea continued to work even when he was sick. His prayer life enabled him to accept everything as willed by God, offering this as a means of sanctification for himself. As Don Valdir Castro states:

As a religious, Brother Andrea Maria Borello, who humbly devoted his life to the service of God, died at the age of thirty two years only. He worked as a shoemaker and was happy with this particular vocation as Disciple of the Divine Master in the Society of Saint Paul. He was always grateful to the Lord because in this vocation he could offer everything of himself, working for the glory of God through the good press. He often used to say to his companions: "We must be grateful to the Lord, who made us a gift of such a beautiful vocation." Andrea, in fact, held the virtue of humility as the uniform of the true Disciple; it was truly his characteristic virtue and he made it a life programme. He himself, just before his death, could give this testimony to the religious who assisted him: "I have always wanted to live in humility and concealment, because the rest does not count for anything." Neither did he perform spectacular actions nor was he even gifted with extraordinary charisms. Everything in his life took place in "normalcy".³⁶

In 1959, Andrea's body was moved from the local cemetery to the chapel of the Institute in the cemetery of Alba and later to the church of Sao Paolo Apostolo in Alba. The letters and other belongings of Brother Andrea Maria Borello were burned at his death, by order of the legal health office, to avoid the danger of infection. The first case for his beatification took place in Alba on 31 May 1964. Speaking of Brother Andrea, Blessed Alberione stated:

He is a model for us all. Brother Andrea deserves to be glorified and proves to be an example to all those who do the Apostolate of Social Communication, but in a special way to the Brothers of the Pious Society of Saint Paul, as they are the backbone of the congregation and play an important part in the congregation.³⁷

Brothers who ride on Four Wheels

The Brothers ride on their Pauline Life together with other members of the Pauline Family in a car with the four wheels of Prayer, Poverty, Study, and Apostolate. Blessed Alberione wanted all the Brothers to be trained, formed and expected to integrate their whole person in Jesus Christ for total love of God: intellect, will, heart and physical strength. They have to integrate all the four wheels as one occupation of piety, including Holy Mass, meditation, an hour before the Blessed Sacrament and study, which includes intellectual formation for a very challenging apostolate. He harnessed everything with the nature of, grace for, and vocation to the apostolate. The work the Pauline Brothers do is apostolate that is, translating the Gospel into present-day situations. They live as brothers in common, and as communicators they constantly keep abreast of the issues of the time.

Formation of the whole man in Christ Jesus means formation through all aspects of a total love of God: intelligence, will, heart, physical energies. Everything: nature, grace, vocation, is for the apostolate. Thus the Pauline car rests on the four wheels of Prayer, Poverty, Study, and Apostolate.

Blessed Alberione says that life is a great journey towards eternity and each day is a stage of that journey. The wise driver starts with prudence, a cardinal virtue. In his mind he goes over the road to be travelled. This represents 'preventive examination'. He makes sure he has fuel, oil, good tyres – everything he needs for the journey. This represents God's help, through prayer. "These are the four wheels of the car which have to move in unison, without jolting, without jeopardizing the cargo they are transporting." The car he mentions is spoken of in a figurative sense to highlight the basic foundations of the Pauline Family and the vital union it has with Jesus Christ. For him, the whole person — intellect, will, heart, and physical strength — must lie in Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and

the Life, for a total love of God.

Piety

Piety is said to be the golden chain that connects humanity with God. In the Gospels, specific occasions suggest that Jesus Christ, though a man of God and indeed God Himself, spends time in prayer to be spiritually nourished and strengthened in His human life (cf Mk 1:35; 6:46; 14:32-42; Lk 3:21-22; 5:16; Mt 26:36-46).³⁸

The specific objectives of Pauline Piety seem to be three:

- a. Continuous contact with the various sources, the Bible and the Eucharist.
- b. Special care of the total development of the human person: “May they grow in wisdom, grace, and virtue.”
- c. Prayer oriented to apostolic communication: “by loving sincerely with the mind, will, heart, and actions” (cf DSGC, 398; *Io sono con voi*, p. 3).

A daily visit to the Blessed Sacrament is born and directed as the relationship of the disciple with Christ, the Master. It is the daily class for the integral growth of life and for sincere disposition to the apostolate (DSGC, 401).

Alberione was a man of prayer. It was typical of his spirituality to transform everything into prayer. He used to tell the disciples, “Prayer is the first and main duty of the Brothers. It has to be before all, above the life of all.”³⁹ He considered it a means of integration and not a means to cope with difficulties, to gain strength to bear them, or to solve problems of one’s own making.

“From Canon Chiesa he had learned to transform everything into a theme of meditation and prayer before the Divine Master — a prayer of adoration, thanksgiving, atonement, and supplication.”⁴⁰ He wanted the same spirit to be in the life of his Brothers who are communicators; who need an intense relationship with God in order to maintain always intact the force of their apostolate; thus to pass from contemplation to action.

Poverty

The lived experience of Blessed Alberione shows that he depended on

God for everything. He never relied on earthly treasures, instructing his disciples to expect the reward of their work only in heaven, as he says, “Paradise is our all and only destiny: ours because God created us for it and our Lord Jesus Christ reopened for us paradise lost. It is not our end to acquire wealth, honour or pleasure.”⁴¹

Poverty is the greatest wealth; any little renunciation in pleasure, clothing, or living conditions is a great conquest for heaven. Pauline poverty has five functions: it renounces, it produces, it conserves, it provides and it edifies.

It *renounces* administration and independent use of goods, comforts, pleasure and preferences; everything is for functional use only.

It *produces*, by diligent work, enough for undertakings and personnel.

It *conserves* the things it has in use.

It *provides* for the Institute’s needs.

It *edifies*, countering the tendency to greed.⁴²

Pauline poverty typically consists in renouncing (independent use and administration of things); in producing (by hard work); in preserving (maintenance of things in use); and in providing (for the needs of the institute); in building (by overcoming the desire for goods) Cf. Pred VP 294; CD 91.2.

Study

The general line of study as seen by the founder shows the intention of making study not an end in itself but willing it along the order of the integral formation of the person, giving it all the breath it can assume under the light of Christ and orienting it in love, which is exercised in the apostolate (DSGC, 402).

Apostolate

The end of the apostolate consists in giving salvation to humanity: Jesus Christ, the Way, Truth and Life. And in order to “bring the whole Christ to man and render the whole man to God through Jesus Christ” (DSGC, n 139), the Brothers should employ the fastest and most efficacious means of preaching through use of the media of social communication. The

content of the apostolate must be all- embracing and global; thus a “wholistic” approach of the Pauline Apostolate includes the following dimensions:

Fraternal Life

In the spirit of the Founder, the fraternal life of the Brothers is born out of the apostolate and in view of the apostolate. It is an expression of their lived experience. “This type of society whose goal has been so finalised includes, to be sure, the common good of the members; at the same time, however, the very observance of communitarian life has an organisation that must take into account that ‘we are at the service of persons’; we are religious apostles” (*UPS I*, 285).

The religious community was born as an intention to love...all together, by loving one another they express their love in the integral fulfillment of the Pauline Apostolate (*DSGC*, n 409). The Pauline community has the continuous need of feeling its presence in the Church as love in order to be sincerely faithful to itself up to the end, and in order to be able to offer itself as a “call” to many lives that desire to become “everything to everyone” (*DSGC*, n 408).

Insistence on a solid organisation: “An organisation would be formed, but a religious one whose energies would be united, whose dedication would be total, and whose doctrine would be purer. And this society of souls, loving God with all their mind, strength and heart, would spend themselves in the work of the Church...” (*AD 21-22*).

The persons who make up the community constitute its fundamental value and the community’s goal is to give them fraternal help towards their sanctification through their dedication to the apostolate (*CD*, 17).

Transcending the Blocks

In this process of ascending from human brotherhood towards the Mount of Pauline Brotherhood, one may encounter certain blocks. Inordinate desires to “be more” and “have more” may creep into the life of Brotherhood, of loving others as Jesus has loved. Fulfilment of one desire may become the beginning of another, leading one to total attachment, wearing out the soul. As a consequence of this, there is danger of a Brother sitting by his side to become hell for a Brother who is attached to worldly desires, leading him to feel his presence as a source

of discomfort for him.

The Pauline Brotherhood, transcending the desire to have more, leads them to be Brothers of Jesus Christ – by going through disfiguration of themselves by living out their life in humility, charity and detachment to reach the final stage of Religious and Pauline brotherhood and experience the transfiguration of Christ in their lives.

Seen in this light, the Brothers can rediscover their living space, that is, living in the mode that the Founder so recommended: *They will not make much noise, but they can spread the pleasing odour of Christ* (bonus odor Christi) *everywhere* (SP, 1937).

Chapter – 3

THE PAULINE BROTHERHOOD

Inspired by the words of Saint Paul to the Ephesians [2:7], in comparing himself with Saint Paul, Blessed James Alberione, founder of the Pauline Family, says, “He might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” He considers himself the recipient of the immeasurable, overflowing riches of God’s grace for his family and invites his disciples to respond together with him to God in the same measure of love and service to God.⁴³

In the Footsteps of Saint Paul and Alberione

Alberione points out to the Disciples of the Pauline Family that it is Saint Paul who is the actual Founder of their family: “...To all members he has given the same spirituality mediated by Saint Paul: “...the Disciple who knows the Divine Master in his fullness; ...he presents to us the total Christ, as the latter had already defined himself, Way, Truth and Life” (AD n. 159). Everyone must regard Saint Paul the Apostle alone as father, teacher, exemplar and founder.”⁴⁴ Therefore the Brothers are to walk in the footsteps of Saint Paul, considering him as their Founder. They are to imitate the humility of Saint Paul and Alberione by refraining from taking any credit for the fruit of their work of apostolate. The two-fold humbling story of Alberione narrated by him in the third person shows the story of God’s infinite mercy and grace showered on him, “his lack of conformity to the overabundance of divine love, and his need to compose a new, sorrowful “Miserere”.⁴⁵ What shows his great humility is his admission of receiving the same grace and mercy that was shown to Saint Paul on his way to Damascus. Alberione and Saint Paul become models for living a life of humility. They are also models to be adapted to the apostolate of proclamation of the Word of God in the cultural context in which the Brothers live. Alberione calls the Brothers the *Disciples of the Divine Master* and entrusts the apostolate of the Good Press to them under the protection and guidance of the Divine Master, (UCBS 4 June 1922).⁴⁶ He exhorts them to follow the supreme model of humility of Jesus Himself. The disciples imitate the methods of Alberione and Saint Paul to

overcome their weaknesses and shortcomings in living and giving Jesus to the world.

The Pauline Brotherhood is to walk in the footsteps of Alberione, sharing with their fellow priests the mission of their Patron, Saint Paul, to live and give Jesus Christ to the modern world through the media of social communication. They have to follow the methods of Saint Paul as proposed by their Founder, who said, “The Disciples of the Divine Master are called Brothers in the Pauline Family, as the time has come for institutes when the religious priest finds the door open to works of zeal and the care of souls. Today we need to give the Brothers a share in this priestly zeal.”⁴⁷ “The priest writes and the Brother does the technical work of reproducing it over and over and distributing it. Priest and Brother are intimately linked in the Religious Life and united in the same apostolate, to prepare their heavenly crown together.”⁴⁸

Conjoined and Consolidated Life

Although distinct by divine institution, the Brothers are conjoined and consolidated in the unity of one community. Despite different vocations, aptitudes and conditions, they tend towards a common goal. The priest’s preaching is freed from dependence on ordinary workers and replicated indefinitely by modern resources. The work of the Brother uplifts his activity, makes it joyful, and increases it. God is glorified, the Gospel is proclaimed and people are enlightened.”⁴⁹ Technical work that makes the Brothers [Disciples] multiplier-diffusers goes thus: ‘*vos autem gens sancta, regale sacerdotium*’! Intimately connected, the religious, priest and brother, united and consolidated in the same life and apostolate, prepare for the heavenly crown.”⁵⁰ The apostolate of the Brothers, following the example and preaching of Saint Paul, is ultimately based on the liberty, solidarity and spirituality of Saint Paul, enabling the Brothers to live in Christ and give Jesus Christ, the Way, Truth and Life to the world.

A Call to Freedom

A call to live, with unity in diversity, their consolidated life of fraternity in freedom is the need of the hour. In the hierarchical structure of community life, one may wish to dominate or be dominated. It is a well known fact that all human beings have experienced some kinds of ‘calls’

and some kinds of 'freedoms' but a call to the Pauline Brotherhood as a call to freedom is a thing unique and worthy of reflection. This freedom consists not in doing whatever one wants but in a free response to the call of God. It means a changed attitude of mind and heart in the face of everyday life. By changing one's inner attitude, one can change the outer aspects of one's life.

Therefore whether the Pauline Brothers feel free or not depends on their attitude. Even though some feel they are not free, as they are governed by a hierarchy of priests, when they meditate well they will understand that they are called to be fundamentally free if they have the right and healthy attitude towards freedom.

As followers of Christ, the supreme model of freedom and Brotherhood, the Brothers adapt to their changed outlook towards the rules and regulations of day-to-day living, and let the Truth set them free. Looking at Jesus, Saint Paul and Blessed Alberione, who were where they wanted to be because it was where the Father wanted them to be, in the same way, the Brothers shall remain where they are called and do what they are asked to do by their Father in Heaven. For this they need to tame their mind, will and heart, and put on the attitude of Christ just as Saint Paul did and experienced freedom. It will help them realise that their freedom is not just a luxury to be enjoyed but a cross to be borne. This cross can be easy and light if they rely on the words of Jesus; remain in contact with God through prayer; and choose not to be in the bondage of sin and selfishness. When a Brother loses his eagerness and taste for prayer he automatically gets discouraged and chooses to be in bondage.

At times, the Brothers may feel over-protected and over-burdened by authorities and lose their taste for a life of true freedom. When they feel that they are over-protected, obedience to those who are above them in authority becomes a compulsory task and it may seem impossible to be free. Personality clashes may likely poison their living as a community of Brothers in a bond of love and friendship. They might have to pull on with their life like prisoners who have received life imprisonment. Therefore, allowing the Spirit of the Lord to work in them, a pertinent challenge they can pose to themselves is to evaluate and examine themselves and find out whether they are really free. Are they really free to serve God and His

people? Do they not feel at times the loss of their freedom?

Today, more than ever, the need for freedom from various factors that keep one in bondage is very much felt in the life of the Fraternity. Caught up in the web of pairs of opposites like joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, likes and dislikes etc., one may remain between Hell and Heaven. At heart one may yearn for freedom, but in reality one is in bondage.

When the Brothers are under the impression that, bound by rules and regulations, they are called to bondage rather than freedom, they must turn to Saint Paul, who says, "You are called to freedom, brothers; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another" (Gal 5:13).

Therefore, in order to project a correct image of their lifestyle and live a life worthy of their call to freedom, they must reflect on the Word of God. Their reflection on the Word of God must be such that it should enable them to live the Gospel radically. Saint Paul avers that Christ has already set them free and therefore they are no longer slaves but Brothers in freedom.

Freedom from within

The call of the Brothers as a call to freedom is a gratuitous gift from God which may be accepted or refused. If accepted, they have to become servants of one another with love. If they live only for their personal welfare then they will not be able to live the Gospel way of life and they will automatically be inclined to live according to the flesh, which in turn will lead them to the yoke of slavery. "Stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery" (Gal 5:1). Their life of commitment must be integrated with the two dimensions of freedom: "freedom from" and "freedom for". The former is freedom from one's own selfishness and egocentric attitudes, which has to begin from within oneself. The latter is to extend that freedom to others. "Freedom from" can be achieved by one's own renunciation of likes and dislikes in accepting a life of commitment to renounce everything that might offer momentary happiness such as possessions, power, wealth, and even one's own self for the sake of Christ.

Though the possessiveness of human nature cannot be totally eliminated, their commitment to Jesus spurs the Brothers to achieve

freedom of the heart. Commitment to Jesus is possible only by removing egocentric attitudes through creating poverty of spirit. It also liberates the control of one's own likes and dislikes.

Even the prayer life of the Brothers has to be updated from a kind of mechanical repetition of certain fixed formulas. Their prayer life must strengthen them to step out of their own selfish nature and live together as brothers in one family, united in one heart and one mind. If not, their life of fraternity might seem meaningless and their call to freedom might seem like a call to bondage. The mission of spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ through the means of communication will not be effective in their Pauline life. Their human nature of self-centred, self-destructive thinking, enslavement to sinful thought processes, etc., has to be replaced by the divine nature of Jesus at each and every moment of their life through prayer and penance. They have to fight an internal battle that can bring them step by step closer to Christ. They have to focus their attention on their Founder who has given them a synthesis of his thoughts from the writings of Saint Paul, "to gather all things" (Eph 1:9-10) in Christ, "the Way, the Truth and the Life" (Jn 14:6)... as revealed to him by the Word of God. Therefore, "freedom from" is a commitment to Christ – a commitment to live in Him and for Him, having the mind of Christ in all that they do.

Freedom for others

"Freedom for" is a commitment to humanity through love and service. In other words, their life of commitment must enable them to be free to serve God and His people. In this way, "freedom from" leads them to "freedom for". It calls for a Gospel way of life, a life rooted in poverty in spirit and in reality. It is a call to responsibility, to be a "prince of peace"; to be the "shalom" between God and humans and between people and other people. It is a call to liberate the world which is accelerating towards its own destruction. The scientific world of today with its Internet and digital media needs their helping hand for its liberation. It cries out for help from its media brothers; their communication of information to the whole world has become the need of the hour. Using their experience and technology they can effectively reach everyone in the world with the good news of Jesus Christ.

Freedom and Social Communication

With the zeal of their patron, Saint Paul, and their Blessed Founder, they are to use the power of these means of social communication to reach every kind of society. They are called to conquer the world by spreading the values of Christ through these means. As Saint Paul says, “I desire that you also fight to imitate Christ” (Eph 5:1).

They must think in terms of having a television facility with moral content, with educational films, a school of journalism to train humanity to justice, peace, social commitment, with magazines and newspapers and a Universal Centre of Spirituality, etc. They can make Saint Paul come alive today. Their commitment demands that they do not turn a blind eye and deaf ear to the unfortunate people affected by the media world who are hungry not only for bread but also hungry to be liberated from their own enslavement to sin and recognised as human beings. They are hungry for a genuine uplifting of the mind, will, and heart; to be loved and accepted in society.

“Freedom for” can be a costly affair and a very demanding challenge of the times but that indeed is the need and sign of the hour! The poor in spirit need to be uplifted and the oppressed to be liberated to enter the Promised Land of freedom, where justice and equality will reign and universal brotherhood/sisterhood will be established. Only then will they enter into that Heaven of freedom.

Becoming all things to all people

Although Saint Paul was free from all people, he made himself a slave to all so that he might win more people. He became a Jew to the Jews so that he might win over the Jews. Though he was not under the Law, he put himself under the Law to win over those who were under the Law. He became weak that he might win the weak. Thus he became all things to all people that he might save some by all means. All these things he did for the sake of the Gospel, that he might become a fellow partaker of it.

This act of Saint Paul can be adopted today by the Brothers to live and act in ways that are different from the way they would act. It makes a big difference if they have the same aim as that of Saint Paul: to win over people and save the present world.

Therefore, as partakers in the benefits of the apostolate of the media, the Brothers are to consider Saint Paul in this sense a person of multimedia.

He used various forms in his apostolate, such as personal announcements, preaching in synagogues, in streets, squares, public places, the communities he founded, through letters, etc. to transmit the Gospel. The Brothers are to learn from him and adapt themselves to different forms of apostolate for every audience of the modern world. A forum for each audience must be the motto of their apostolate as Saint Paul said: "I did everything for everyone, to save someone at any cost" (1 Cor 9:19-23).

Apostolate of Social Media Network

Taking into consideration the example of Saint Paul and the need of the hour, the Brothers are to use for their apostolate, social networks, digital networks and internet with the same dynamic spirit as their patron. The logic is the same; the method is the same and the strategy is the same, except that the means and participants are to be changed according to the signs of the times.

Saint Paul and Communications

Saint Paul primarily had an uncommonly keen sense of personal communication before founding communities, and he followed this up by establishing a network of collaborators and communication paths to reach the communities: visits and letters. He served the Church through his knowledge of the theology of communication and the science of right pastoral application. He was a writer, a journalist, an audio-visual innovator and a creative apostle with the use of the media, inside and outside the Pauline Family.

Alberione and Communications

To the mind of Blessed Alberione, the Pauline Brothers' apostolate trains speakers to speak about God and Pauline priests to be writers about God. This idea of the Founder is more visible in the life of Saint Paul as the Brothers are technicians, propagandists and writers united in a single apostolate. In this regard, the news bulletin of San Paolo states, "Saint Paul conceived his letters and dictated them, reserving the right to sign them; good Christians multiplied them, copied them and then spread them. He exercised the true apostolate of the editions."⁵¹

Brothers in the Publishing Apostolate

The publishing apostolate of the Brothers is to spread divine truth, both

oral and written. With their work of technical, diffusion and propaganda departments, they grow in their apostolic zeal to bring Christ to the people by the most modern means of social communication.

Blessed Alberione affirms that the pulpit is not enough to preach the Word of God. Adopting all means available, they must change themselves according to the times in this accelerating world of change. They have to walk with the world of cinema, radio, television, internet, digital media, and everything they can use to communicate God's Word. Technical means, machines, characters, the whole radio apparatus, the writer's office, the technical room, are sacred to the purpose they serve. Therefore machines, bookshops, audio-video studios, media colleges etc must become pulpits. When such means of communication serve to evangelise, they receive consecration; they are elevated to the highest dignity.

Thus Blessed Alberione has left for the Brothers an apostolic method allowing them to incorporate every new invention in the field of communication into a complete project of evangelisation. Even iconic depictions, paintings or statues are conceived by him as a visual synthesis of the written word and its preaching.

Integration of Spirituality and apostolate

The spirituality of Blessed Alberione is rooted in Jesus the Master's Way, Truth and Life and involves the whole life of the Brothers oriented towards apostolate. It becomes a spiritual project for the full development of their life of faith in the Master. The more faithful they are to it, the more faithful they are to their call to live and give Jesus to the world. It is truly the centre of their Pauline project.

- Jesus our Master is the source of the apostolate, of the community, of their consecration. They are to consider everything as starting from Him and make Him the project of life of the Congregation and of its individual members.
- The Apostolate is to manifest the Divine Master, radiating His life and proclaiming Him throughout the world by all means available. They put themselves in the first place in the school of Jesus the Master with serious spiritual work and work of evangelisation which, for the Founder, had its centre in his

editorial: “Do not take away what is most important, that is, work in one’s interior life and editorial work. If so, we shall not be Paulines. We must be Paulines... Paulines first, religious first, and then we will do this or that...” (2/12/1954). The proclamation, however, remains empty if our life is not immersed in his like Saint Paul’s.

- It is a point of application for formation, which is translated into the elaboration of a Pauline pedagogy that motivates, stimulates, guides and sustains the journey of growth in Jesus the Master on all levels.⁵²

Holding an open book showing the words, “the Way, the Truth and the Life”, Jesus the Master blesses them. Mary, Queen of Apostles, reaches out to beholders with the Child Jesus blessing them with His right hand and holding a scroll in His left; Saint Paul holds a sword in one hand and a book in the other. For the apostle of written preaching these three models represent the synthesis between contemplation and action and the continuity of incarnation of the Divine Word which, after becoming *flesh*, today wants to take on the appearance of *paper*. “Our apostolate requires science. First, common science, then the science of the media. The spiritual process of Christification and apostolic professionalism must be closely related and mutually dependent.”⁵³

The press and media apostolate constitute the heart of the Pauline Brothers’ apostolate that helps translate their personal and communitarian experience of Jesus Christ into a book; an opinion shared by way of an article in a newspaper or magazine; an idea translated into a subject or script for cinema, radio or television broadcast; in music or in comic book form, etc. It is “translated” faith in a work of communication that becomes “testimony” entrusted to the providence of the Spirit that works in writers, readers, listeners, spectators, etc. The publishing apostolate of the Brothers is preaching of the Divine Word, proclamation, evangelisation of the Good News according to the divine precept: “Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature, every person.” The press apostolate is true evangelisation because it preaches an integral faith (dogma, morals, worship) that has as privileged recipients people that no longer go to church and men of culture for their influence on the masses. There is priority in offering the contents

(Catechism, Bible and Tradition); the initial medium is the print, to which is then added other means of mass media and “every new medium that will be invented”. The Brothers are totally available to carry out this mission as a community; they need special formation for the apostolate of the media and they look for young people who are passionate about this apostolate. The experience of faith to be communicated is based on a suitable spirituality that is modelled on Saint Paul. They must update themselves with the latest inventions of the world such as digital media, as our contemporary world is marked by two major transformations:

Studying the advantages and disadvantages of use of digital media, they must think of sanctifying the media, internet, social media, digital media etc., by using them for evangelisation. They need to have a digital television channel with moral content; interactive social media with educational films and videos; a school of journalism to train humanity for justice, peace, social commitment; magazines and newspapers; a Universal Centre of Spirituality, etc. Thus they make Saint Paul and Alberione come alive today.

Saint Paul, Mystic and Apostle

The mysticism of Saint Paul is unlike the mysticism of Saint John of the Cross or of Saint Therese of Avila but one that involves living a life of Brotherhood in a community of Brothers. It is a communal life, ecclesial in nature. It is a continuous perseverance towards a progressive and dynamic process of conformity with Christ, whereby they truly become Brothers to one another. It is a deepening of the experience of Christ and of their urge to evangelisation and mission. It is important to note that revelation and communication, mysticism and apostolate, are inseparable dimensions of a single experience of Saint Paul. Blessed Alberione, interpreting the mysticism of Saint Paul in his books, *Donec formetur Christus in vobis* (1933), *Abundantes divitiae gratiae suae* (1954), and *Ut perfectus sit homo Dei* (1960), asks the Brothers to consider him a mystic and an apostle. Reflecting on the writings and life of Saint Paul, Alberione came to know of his mysticism in the grace of revelation that changed his life; the Trinitarian and ecclesial dimensions of the Christian experience; communion with the Lord; awareness of being chosen by God; living “in Christ”; faith and the eschatological dimension; suffering embraced for the sake of the apostolate as he says,. “If we live, we live for the Lord. If

we die, we die for the Lord. Whether we live or die, we are therefore of the Lord” [cf Rom 14:8]. Lord, “you have judged me worthy of trust calling me to the ministry, I that formerly had been a blasphemer... but I received mercy” (cf 1Tim 1:12-13). We find in St. Paul nobility, thanksgiving, humility and correspondence to the will of God.

The Brothers and Pauline Family as a whole received this mandate from Saint Paul and Blessed Alberione to live and give Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life, to the world. They must live in Jesus Christ to the point that He alone “lives, thinks, works, loves, wills, prays, suffers, dies and rises again in us”. As the head of regenerated humanity, He forms with all believers a mystical body of Christ whose members are bound by charity that animates the same life, where only one heart beats, the Heart of Jesus Christ.⁵⁴ It is not an easy task for Brothers to be other centred but their imitation of their patron St Paul leads them to strive forward as he says, “thus I force myself to please everybody in everything, without seeking my advantage but that of all, so that they may reach salvation” [1Cor 10:33].

He buried all that the world offered him: power, importance, influence, despising suspicions, derision, persecutions and scorn. He abandoned all claims, forgot his needs... He became indifferent to praise and blame: “For me it is of little importance to be judged by you or by any human tribunal; on the contrary, I do not even judge myself, because even if I’m not aware of any fault, not for this I am justified. My judge is the Lord!” (1Cor 4:3-4). Without possessions, without human support, without physical strength, without anything of his own to save, not even his life, he will work for all, always, until death; that he also challenges: “Where, O death, is your victory?” [1Cor 15:55].⁵⁵

In order to be “Saint Paul living today”, the totality of the Institutes of the Pauline Family must “think together” about a complete Project of new evangelization, having as point of reference what blessed Alberione points to us in Saint Paul. Hence, it is necessary to put together the common “Pauline Spirit” in order to articulate “the convergence of the various apostolates” in a missionary faith.⁵⁶

As we live in social media and self-focused world, it is tempting to base our worth on the number of Facebook friends, youtube and Instagram likes and satisfy our deep longing for relationships

and friendships with unknown friends. We may clamour for attention such as “Look at me” “Notice my greatness” “See what I have achieved” etc. Being imitators of St. Paul we need to focus our attention on something greater than these media friendships. Our joy in friendship must be rooted on the Gospel and this partnership in the mission must increase our joy. Saint Paul asks us to make our joy complete by living like Jesus. We must take on the attitude of Jesus and live humbly as servants of one another, considering others as more significant than ourselves.. It is in fact our sharing in St. Paul’s pathway to joy.

Chapter – 4

PROPOSALS FOR AN EFFECTIVE PAULINE FAMILY

- The life and Mission of the Pauline Family is a life of communication. It is often said that success in life depends on hard work, honesty and many other values, but one hardly hears it said that success also depends largely on communication.
- As Communicators of God's Word through the Media of Social Communications, members of the Pauline Family should not forget that all its activities take place through communication. The effectiveness of its communication depends on its members' ability to communicate among themselves.
- There is also great need for the Pauline family, by reading the signs of the times, to adapt itself to be able to help people both spiritually and socially to meet their needs in keeping with their taste through the means of social media.
- In our world of Internet and digital media, communication of information to the whole world concerning the teachings of Jesus Christ is now easier and faster. Using their God-given talents and the technology of the modern world they can effectively reach everyone in the world with the good news of Jesus Christ.
- The following suggestions, recommendations and guidelines that I propose for the purpose of living and giving Jesus Christ to the world of today would, I am sure, help all the members of the Pauline Family to be better Media Missionaries in a world that rotates on innovativeness in its modes of communication!

Saint Paul Alive today

- In all its activities, they need to keep alive the spirit of Blessed James Alberione, who never failed to stress that the Pauline Family was founded and raised up by Saint Paul himself to continue the work of spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ to the modern world at any given point of time by use of the

latest means of communication.

- It follows that they ought to ever have in mind that the Pauline Family is none other than Saint Paul himself living today. Alive in his many members united as one body and one spirit, he continues what he was doing when he lived on earth.

Fraternity of Brothers and Sisters

- One of the most rewarding experiences of being together and working together for God is the fraternity of Brotherhood and Sisterhood in the Pauline Family. It is in using their God-given talents to the full through the community in which they have their being; by spending all their potential in terms of time and talent or the treasures of their mind, will and heart for the Lord; and experiencing fraternal love for one another, that the Pauline Family can find heaven here on earth. There are ample opportunities provided in the communities to foster community-building and a spirit of unity among all the members of the Pauline Family.
- There is also a greater need today to build up any broken relationship of mind or heart and take up the challenge of discovering and transmitting the “fraternity” of living together, of mixing, of meeting, of supporting, of participating in everything that can lead to a true experience of fraternity, into a caravan of solidarity, into a holy pilgrimage towards paradise.
- Each and every community of the Pauline Family is urged to live this fraternity. The unitary community of the Pauline get-together locally can be considered as a microcosm for the Macrocosm of the Pauline Family all over the world. It refers directly to the vision of the Founder of the Pauline Family to live and give Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life, to the whole world. The fulfillment of this vision has to begin with and in each member of the community.
- There is also an acute need to create a deep sense of fraternity within the Pauline Family, the way it was in its beginning stage at Alba, by way of opening their hearts to one another and increase their love for the other in terms of working for the Lord.
- This is something that has to start with each and every community of the Pauline Family. Essentially the quality of

breaking themselves for one another must stem from the basic value of being fully human and fully alive, such as how to be a brother or sister to the person sitting next to them; how to accept the other as he or she is; how to be caring and compassionate and so on.

- Being a Brother or Sister for the benefit of the other would help them to become a Brother or a Sister for Christ and would ultimately lead them to be brothers and sisters of Christ pouring out their altruistic love for one another to the hilt.

Car with Four Wheels

- Keeping in mind that the Pauline Family is like a car moving on the four wheels of piety, study, apostolate and poverty, the Brothers and Sisters of the Pauline Family ride on this car, carrying the Good News of Jesus to the people all over the world. Running over roads of the media of social communications of the modern world, it has to be checked thoroughly and regularly to ensure that all its parts are functioning properly, the body of the car firmly united with its wheels, becoming one entity.
- Unity in diversity must be the motto of every member of the Pauline Family to work together on its four wheels. Be Saint Paul alive today just as Christ lived in the heart of Saint Paul, and make Saint Paul live in the hearts of the members of the Pauline Family through prayer. "Christ lives in me!" (Gal 2:20) Live like Jesus the Life; think like Jesus the Truth, and walk along Jesus the Way by riding on this car with the same zeal of our Patron Saint Paul.

Prayer Life

- The whole Pauline Family is enriched by its life of prayer. Study of Scripture, Christian Doctrine, the life of our Founder and his works etc. offer effective guidelines for prayer. The outcome of prayer is their work in the apostolate of the Media. They work together as a family in the school of Jesus the Master and take Him to the world.
- Members of the Pauline Family must be faithful to their prayer life so as to integrate their life in the person of Jesus Christ for a total love of God: intellect, will, heart, and physical strength.

- Keeping in mind that each day is a stage in the journey towards Heaven they must live their life with the prudence of having enough oil or fuel for the journey.
- They must live the prayer life as it connects the Pauline Family with God, keeping it as the principal duty of everyday life by positioning prayer before all and making prayer the life of all.
- They must pray to live the life of Jesus and not to solve man-made problems, but say with Saint Paul, "I live now, not I, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2.20).
- They must consider everything as nothing if there is no prayer, but with prayer, everything becomes something great. They must be persons of prayer as well as persons of action; in other words, active and contemplative persons.
- They must transform everything into a theme of meditation and prayer before the Divine Master: a prayer of adoration, thanksgiving, atonement, and supplication.

Intellectual Formation

- Prepare young Paulines for the Pauline life and mission according to each one's ability and talent and not one's own taste. Point out to them that study is essential to obtain knowledge about human and Christian values with a view to living a better life in Christ.
- Make it compulsory for every Pauline to attend in their own particular country a course on the Charism of the Pauline Family in order to know and love the works of God done gradually through Blessed Alberione.
- With the words of Albert Einstein, "The more I learn, the more I realise how much I don't know," Blessed James Alberione gives great importance to the study aspect of the Pauline mission, exhorting his sons and daughters to study for the purpose of attaining perfection and a sense of fulfillment in the apostolate.
- Study in order to know Jesus and His doctrine more and understand it better
- Study about Jesus the Truth in Scripture, the Constitutions of our Congregations, the Pauline charism, in order to understand, reflect and live the totality of the humanity of Jesus (mind, will and heart) and the totality of the divinity of Jesus (Way, Truth

and Life).

- Study the Christology of Blessed Alberione to better understand the Trinitarian aspect of God. Sharing a perfect relationship with one another as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the three persons of the Holy Trinity are the perfect example for our life of unity in diversity, uniting the Pauline Family.
- Study Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and His dual nature with a view to applying His ways in the daily life and mission of the Pauline Family.
- Study Christ's faculties of mind, will and heart so as to belong to the "whole Man" in Jesus and in their own selves without any mutilation or fragmentation, so that these faculties will lead them from being inhuman to human, from self-centredness and selfishness to Brotherhood or Sisterhood!

Media Apostolate

- In the spirit of the Founder, the living experience of fraternal life in communion with the Brothers and Sisters of the entire Pauline Family has to be borne out in the form of an active apostolate, in view of the importance of the mission. In other words, the lived experience of Jesus Christ in community life is being expressed or taken to the world.
- Employ the fastest and most efficacious means of preaching through the use of the media of social communications.

The content of the apostolate must be global and all-embracing, whereby a holistic approach to the Pauline Apostolate includes the following dimensions:

- Do not count the hours but do the work of the apostolate with all one's God-given energy, especially intelligence, will, heart and physical energies, to translate the Gospel way of life into a reality in our present-day life situations; to form the whole man in Christ in all aspects of a total love of God: Update oneself with the fastest means of communication, technically and intellectually, such as media of internet, digital marketing, Google analytics, interactive websites, communication skills, etc.
- Pauline Book and Media Centres must concentrate on value-

added education projecting direct or indirect ways of giving the values of Jesus Christ in perceived needs of the audience starting with human values (akin to the publication of “Better Yourself Books” in India).

- Foster greater collaboration among all members of the Pauline Family, including secular Institutes and Pauline Cooperators, by providing opportunities to work together.
- With the zeal of their patron saint, the Apostle Paul, and their Founder, Blessed Alberione, the members of the Pauline Family must use the power of the means of social communication to reach out to every category of society. They must conquer the world by spreading the values of Christ through these means. As Saint Paul teaches: “I desire that you too fight to imitate Christ” (Eph 5:1).
- The driving force of every Pauline is Saint Paul’s invitation to “strain forward”, whereby they must project themselves into the future in a television channel with moral content; with educational films; a school of journalism to train humanity in the path of justice, peace, social commitment; with magazines and newspapers; and a Universal Centre of Spirituality, etc., to become Saint Paul alive today!

Detachment

- This consists in dying to slothfulness, pride, egoistic tendencies of worldliness etc., and being free from the clutches of worldly attachments so as not to be possessed by them. They must be charitable with God-given potentialities for the work of God to all persons, especially the elderly and the disabled in the community.
- Ask the Lord for the grace of the spirit of poverty, which also includes the dimensions of health, sound education and impeccable character; this concerns everything connected with daily needs like food, residence, clothing and all the things necessary for life.
- Keep everything for the apostolate and possess nothing for oneself to enable the Family to obtain what is needed to carry out the apostolate and support basic human needs. Live a life of poverty to do more acts of charity, like those acts that the

Son of God did in the little house of Nazareth.

- Renouncing the pleasure of pleasing oneself, giving up ostentatious clothing, and scaling down living conditions is a great conquest for Heaven. Depend on God in everything with trust and confidence that He will take care of the Pauline Family as He takes care of the birds of the air, but never rely on earthly treasures.
- They have to integrate all the four wheels as one occupation of piety which includes Holy Mass, meditation, and time before the Blessed Sacrament.
- Along with their prayer life they have to study in order to form their intellect to know the Truth, the Word of God, the Doctrines of Jesus Christ, the lives of the saints, and so on!

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I Fratelli Discepoli nella Famiglia Paolina

Mentre buona parte del mondo ricerca sempre più il potere, la ricchezza e la mondanità spirituale a scapito dell'umanità, una chiamata alla perfezione della carità è qualcosa di impensabile per la gente comune. In questo contesto, i Fratelli Discepoli si sforzano di vivere la mistica della Croce. Ovviamente solo pochi optano per questo tipo di vita che richiede una sorta di annientamento di questa vita perché sia rimodellata su quella di Cristo e sperimentare così la gioia della Trasfigurazione di Cristo.

Il titolo che il Fondatore della Famiglia Paolina ha dato ai Fratelli Paolini e che è loro più appropriato è quello di "Discepoli del Divin Maestro", poiché secondo il beato Alberione essi sono gli strumenti adatti per realizzare la Missione di diffondere la Buona Novella di Gesù Cristo attraverso i mezzi moderni della Comunicazione Sociale.

Egli ha concretizzato le sue parole affidando loro il compito di moltiplicare la Parola di Dio e di diffonderla attraverso il mondo. Alberione ha costantemente insegnato ai suoi discepoli ad armonizzare la loro vita interiore con la maturazione della loro mente, della volontà e del cuore per vivere una vita di semplicità, di duro lavoro e di volontà ferma seguendo l'esempio di san Giuseppe e di san Paolo. In questo gruppo di modelli di semplicità, umiltà e duro lavoro, possiamo includere anche Andrea Borello e lo stesso Alberione, il quale istruiva frequentemente i Fratelli perché rispondessero alla loro chiamata vivendo come discepoli di Gesù; perché consacrassero se stessi nell'amore per il Signore con un cuore indiviso, nella fraternità e in comunione con i Sacerdoti e i membri di tutta la Famiglia Paolina. Il nome di "Discepoli del Divin Maestro" sintetizza il fine di ogni fratello discepolo, di mettersi alla scuola del Maestro, ascoltandolo, conoscendolo e comprendendolo.

La vita della loro Fraternità Paolina è una celebrazione della vita e dell'amore nell'unità e nella totale integrazione tra mente, volontà e cuore. Da qualche parte, si dice che i più grandi risultati nella vita sono di solito raggiunti con mezzi semplici e con l'esercizio di qualità ordinarie. Fedeli a questo detto, i Discepoli del Divin Maestro si trovano privilegiati

a far parte di un gruppo di Fratelli sconosciuti al mondo, ma che portano a compimento i loro impegni nella loro semplicità di vita, con grandi risultati.

Sono contenti di svolgere i loro compiti per Dio e il suo popolo, di diffondere il bene intorno a loro e di avere la brillante qualità di vivere e lavorare insieme come fratelli.

La loro semplicità e amore verso le persone con cui vivono li porta alla santificazione di tutto il loro essere: mente, volontà e cuore.

I Discepoli devono esaminare sempre se stessi alla luce della Parola di Dio e rimettere la loro vita nelle mani di Dio in modo da poter portare e dare la vita con il loro Apostolato dei Media. per contrastare tutto ciò che nel mondo è contrario alla vita.

La loro riflessione sulla se stessi e sulla vita del mondo li rende impegnati per combattere contro tutto ciò che distrugge la vita nel mondo, come anche Gesù è venuto in questo mondo per offrire la pienezza della vita: "Sono venuto in questo mondo per dare la vita e la vita in tutta la sua pienezza" (Gv 10, 10).

I discepoli si dedicano all'amore e al servizio degli altri con il loro modo di vivere da fratelli nella comunione fraterna. La loro vita di amore e di servizio ridona la vita al mondo che ne è privo, rendendoli così simbolo di vita e di amore.

Il metodo del cammino graduale, per una vita integrata nella fraternità, richiede di percorrere uno ad uno i gradi della Fraternità, partendo dalla Fraternità Universale alla Fraternità Umana; dalla Fraternità Umana alla Fraternità Cristiana; dalla Fraternità Cristiana alla Fraternità Religiosa e infine dalla Fraternità Religiosa alla Fraternità Paolina. Durante questo viaggio i Fratelli possono trovarsi di fronte a vari incroci, ma camminando sulle orme di Gesù, Egli certamente li condurrà sulla giusta strada verso la loro destinazione che è la Trasfigurazione in Gesù.

La Fratellanza Universale

La Fratellanza Universale è il primo passo verso l'esperienza della beatitudine della Fraternità. La comunione con la natura e il Creatore è il primo passo verso l'unità dei Fratelli.

La Fratellanza Universale guida i Fratelli a diventare parte integrante della natura e a leggerla come una lettera d'amore del Creatore. Più sanno leggere con il cuore e con la mente più capiscono la persona che l'ha scritta; più capiscono e più si innamorano del Creatore. La partecipazione umana è un compito indispensabile per conservare la creazione. San Francesco d'Assisi, il modello della fraternità universale, ha vissuto la sua vita in modo tale da lasciarsi circondare persino dagli uccelli e dagli animali. Egli era solito rivolgersi a loro come fratelli e persino pregare così:

“Lodato sii mio Signore per Fratello Vento
E per l'aria, le nubi e il sereno e per tutte le stagioni!
Con le quali dai nutrimento alle tue creature!
Lodato sii o mio Signore per nostra sorella, la Madre Terra,
Ella ci sostiene e governa,

La Fratellanza umana

La Fratellanza universale vissuta da San Francesco lo condusse al passo successivo, quello della Fratellanza umana, dissipando l'oscurità dell'odio nella comunità dei Fratelli. Egli ha dimostrato che in qualsiasi situazione in cui l'odio si manifesta, se esso viene affrontato con amore e con abnegazione, questo può solo migliorare le cose, cioè solo rispondendo con amore ed empatia a tutte le situazioni che incontriamo nella vita.

Più la persona ci è cara più ci sarà la capacità di crescere nella Fratellanza umana. Se uno apre il proprio cuore e la propria mente all'altro, il suo amore e il suo rispetto cresceranno conducendolo al dono dell'amicizia. L'amore sincero può manifestarsi pienamente e costruire un intreccio di relazioni di fraternità umana, nell'arricchimento reciproco di un vero amore.

Un Fratello non ha bisogno di un titolo per sentirsi più prezioso, poiché Dio ha già stabilito il suo valore come persona umana. Essere un figlio di Dio è la posizione più alta che si possa immaginare. Nessun titolo umano può essere messo in paragone con questa realtà di essere un figlio di Dio.

Non dovremmo considerare che alcune persone siano importanti e altre no. Questo tipo di atteggiamento o sentimento può spezzare la Fraternità

umana e costruire dei muri intorno alle persone, conducendo all'odio profondo in alcune di esse. L'orgoglio malsano le spingerà a relazioni chiuse, rifiutando di accettare gli altri così come sono; non rispettando gli altri come fratelli e sorelle. È solo comprendendo che la persona umana è l'immagine di Dio, che i fratelli possono rispettare e amare l'umanità. Tutti gli esseri umani sono considerati fratelli e sorelle da coloro che comprendono la Fratellanza umana. È amando e servendo gli uomini che essi amano e servono Dio, che è l'autore della vita umana.

La Fratellanza cristiana

La Fratellanza cristiana è la cristificazione della Fratellanza umana. Ogni opera buona dei Fratelli è fatta nel nome di Gesù Cristo. A questo proposito, nella sua introduzione alla *“Vita fraterna in comunità”*, la Congregazione per gli Istituti di Vita Consacrata afferma:

“L'amore di Cristo ha riunito un gran numero di discepoli per diventare uno, in modo che, come Lui e grazie a Lui, nello Spirito, possano, attraverso i secoli, essere in grado di rispondere all'amore del Padre, amandolo *‘con tutto il loro cuore, con tutta la loro anima, con tutte le loro forze’* (cfr. Dt 6,5) e *amando il loro prossimo ‘come se stessi’*” (cfr. Mt 22,39).

L'esperienza vissuta di Gesù Cristo li rende uniti l'uno all'altro nella comunione. La loro comunità diventa una comunità fraterna in Gesù Cristo. Durante la vita qui sulla Terra, Gesù visse questa fraternità universale e umana e si proclamò fratello dei suoi discepoli. Una prova molto chiara di questa affermazione si trova nel Vangelo di Matteo in cui Gesù dice a Maria Maddalena: “vai dai miei fratelli e di' loro: ascendo al Padre mio e al Padre vostro, al Dio mio e Dio vostro” (Gv 20,17). La profondità della fraternità cristiana emerge in questa affermazione di Gesù poiché la Fraternità dei discepoli tra loro e il Cristo è strettamente connessa con la Paternità di Dio. In altre parole, Gesù e i suoi discepoli uniti con Lui diventano figli del Padre celeste.

A questo proposito, il documento rilasciato dalla Congregazione vaticana, afferma che Gesù è un fratello per i suoi discepoli, quando dice: “Gesù Cristo è diventato innanzitutto un fratello, ha condiviso la nostra carne e il nostro sangue e fu solidale con le sofferenze dei suoi fratelli e sorelle”.

Imitando l'esempio di Gesù come loro fratello, i primi cristiani cercarono

di vivere questa fratellanza nella loro mente e nel loro cuore, come dice la Scrittura: “Erano uniti in una sola mente e un solo cuore” (Atti 2: 42-45). Non c'erano strutture di potere che creavano disuguaglianza o subordinazione nella comunità quando seguivano le parole di Gesù: “Che nessuno si faccia chiamare 'Rabbi', perché uno solo è il vostro maestro, e voi siete tutti uguali come fratelli”. E non rivolgetevi a nessuno qui sulla terra chiamandolo 'Padre', perché solo Dio nel Cielo è vostro Padre. E che nessuno si faccia chiamare 'Maestro', perché uno solo è il vostro insegnante, il Messia. Il più grande tra di voi sia colui che serve” (Mt 23, 8-11).

I discepoli erano molto fedeli alle parole di Gesù e non permettevano che nessuno fosse chiamato Padre poiché il culto del titolo Padre oscura l'unicità di Dio come Abbà (padre) e quindi, così facendo, si distorce il modo di essere fratelli nella comunità. Perciò ogni membro della comunità era chiamato "Fratello" poiché questo termine è un segno d'amore che favorisce la consapevolezza della risposta alla chiamata di Dio nell'amore e nel servizio reciproco. Questo titolo rappresenta un modo significativo di essere nella comunità ecclesiale, in cui c'è la memoria profetica di Gesù-Fratello, che disse ai suoi discepoli: "E voi siete tutti fratelli". (Mt 23, 8).

Papa Francesco incoraggia tutti i Fratelli a vivere il messaggio del Vangelo in modo profetico rispetto al Carisma e alla tradizione particolare del proprio istituto. Dice che essere fratelli di Cristo significa conformarsi a Lui nel fare la sua Volontà, come è scritto nel vangelo di Marco: “Chi sono mia madre e i miei fratelli?”, Egli disse; poi guardando quelli seduti in cerchio attorno a lui, disse: “Ecco mia madre e i miei fratelli! Chiunque fa la volontà di Dio è mio fratello, sorella e madre” (Mc 3, 32-35).

In questa comunità di Fratelli c'erano solo coloro che facevano la Volontà di Dio. Il valore di una persona si giudica unicamente in base al grado di obbedienza alla Volontà di Dio e non dalla distinzione che deriva dalla posizione gerarchica, dalla casta o dal sesso. La comunità dei Fratelli di Gesù è composta di membri uguali tra loro; tutti hanno uguali diritti e doveri, anche se hanno funzioni diverse. Papa Francesco afferma inoltre che la Fraternità cristiana è come una perla che i Fratelli coltivano con cura speciale nel ricordo profetico della loro origine e un invito a fare ritorno ad essa.

La Fratellanza religiosa

La Fratellanza religiosa è nata come testimonianza di questa fratellanza cristiana nella Chiesa. È una chiamata specifica e radicale a vivere la Fratellanza cristiana. Questo dono non è per tutti ma solo per coloro a cui è stato donato. Come dice Gesù, “Non tutti possono capire questo discorso, ma solo coloro a cui è stato concesso. Chi può capirlo capisca” (Mt 19,12).

Papa Francesco afferma: “In contrasto con la mondanità spirituale, che è una pericolosa trappola del diavolo, la Fratellanza religiosa è sbocciata come memoria profetica di Gesù-Fratello, che disse ai suoi seguaci: “E voi siete tutti fratelli” (Mt 23,8). Essa richiede grandi sacrifici da parte dei Fratelli, come totale distacco da tutto ciò che il mondo offre, tra cui la mondanità spirituale dell'onore, del rispetto, ecc.

Poiché i Fratelli abbandonano tutto ciò che il mondo offre, sottomettendosi totalmente a Cristo e assumendosi ogni missione a cui sono chiamati, il loro sacrificio diventa un mezzo di crescita spirituale, a causa della loro adesione alla vita di Gesù. La loro vita di preghiera rafforza la loro fraternità con gli altri membri della comunità per crescere in una profonda comunione con Dio. Si aiutano l'un l'altro e diventano strumenti per la santificazione reciproca. I fratelli si considerano parte di una fratellanza che cammina verso il regno di Dio, anziché vivere come missionari isolati.

La loro comunità diventa una famiglia spirituale con la loro comunione di vita, nella preghiera e nel lavoro. A questo proposito, l'esortazione apostolica di *Vita Consacrata* afferma:

“La Fratellanza Religiosa è una Fratellanza basata sulla volontà di servire il Signore e il Suo popolo, di cui facciamo parte. Poiché sono parte di questo popolo e della sua missione, i religiosi fratelli vivono la loro chiamata come memoriale dell'alleanza, attraverso la loro consacrazione a Dio in una vita fraterna in comunità, per la missione ”.

Così i Fratelli rendono più visibile la comunione che tutto il popolo di Dio è chiamato a incarnare con un totale distacco di cuore, mente e volontà. Come dice Gesù, “sii perfetto, come è perfetto il Padre tuo celeste” (Mt 5,48). La vocazione di un Fratello non è quindi solo intesa come

accoglienza dell'amore di Dio, ma è anche la trasformazione di questo stesso dono della comunione trinitaria nelle relazioni fraterne. Per questo motivo, dire "Fratello" è come dire "mediatore dell'amore di Dio".

La fratellanza paolina

La fraternità attuale della Fratellanza paolina presenta una storia luminosa e carismatica proveniente dalla luce di Gesù Cristo che ha detto: *"Io sono la luce del mondo. Chi mi segue non camminerà nelle tenebre, ma avrà la luce della vita"* (Gv 8, 12). Concentrandosi su questa luce, il Fondatore della Famiglia Paolina udì una chiamata da Gesù che gli diceva: *"Da qui voglio illuminare"*. In altre parole, io sono la tua luce e mi servirò di te per illuminare; Ti sto dando questa missione e voglio che tu la compia.

Ispirato dalle parole di san Paolo agli Efesini (2,7), il beato Giacomo Alberione, si paragona a san Paolo e dice in terza persona: "Egli potrebbe mostrare le immense ricchezze della sua grazia, elargite da Dio con bontà verso di noi, in Cristo Gesù". Egli si considera il destinatario delle ricchezze incommensurabili e traboccanti della grazia di Dio per la sua famiglia e invita i suoi discepoli a rispondere a Dio insieme a lui, con la stessa misura di amore e di servizio a Dio.

Don Alberione ha anche indicato ai discepoli della Famiglia Paolina che è San Paolo il vero fondatore della loro famiglia: "Tutti devono considerare San Paolo Apostolo come unico padre, maestro, modello e fondatore". Quindi i Fratelli devono camminare sulle orme di San Paolo considerandolo come loro Fondatore. Devono imitare l'umiltà di san Paolo, di san Giuseppe e dello stesso Alberione, non attribuendo a sé stessi i frutti del loro lavoro nell'apostolato.

La Fratellanza Paolina è un modo di vivere nel Divino Maestro che è la Via, la Verità e la Vita, predicando e vivendo il Vangelo in uno stile moderno come lo visse san Paolo. Essendo discepoli di Gesù e imitando San Paolo come loro protettore, i fratelli paolini sono chiamati a vivere come Gesù e "si impegnano nella diffusione del messaggio di salvezza attraverso i media della comunicazione sociale e nella formazione delle persone all'uso corretto di questi stessi media". Come San Paolo, lo attualizzano nel loro impegno quotidiano, così da poter dire insieme a San Paolo: "Per me, vivere è Cristo" (Gal 2,20).

Attraverso il Battesimo, docili all'insegnamento del Vangelo, i Fratelli Paolini sono stati consacrati e innestati a Cristo, "il primogenito di molti fratelli" (Rm 8, 29). "Tutti i membri della Pia Società San Paolo professano la stessa vita religiosa, mirano allo stesso fine apostolico, sono guidati dalle stesse costituzioni, condividono gli stessi beni spirituali e materiali e godono degli stessi diritti" (*Costituzioni della Pia Società San Paolo*). Sono chiamati da Dio a comunicare all'umanità la pienezza del mistero di Cristo, di tutto il Cristo (Maestro, Via, Verità e Vita) vissuto nella propria esperienza. Attraverso la Parola e l'Eucaristia i Fratelli sono nutriti in Cristo, e, in Lui, la loro preghiera, il ministero, la consacrazione e la fraternità trovano la loro unità, producendo una sintesi vitale e piena dell'amore. La devozione a Gesù Maestro conduce ad una perfetta adorazione di Dio; perciò più i fratelli paolini la vivono più somigliano a Gesù Cristo. Per attualizzare questa realtà nella loro vita, i Fratelli si impegnano ad essere fedeli alla loro vita di preghiera e imitano l'umiltà di san Paolo, loro protettore, il quale diceva: "A me, che sono meno dell'ultimo di tutti i santi, è stata data questa grazia" (Ef 3,8). Grazie allo Spirito di Dio essi vivono una vita semplice di fraternità come quella di Gesù Cristo che "svuotò se stesso, assumendo una condizione di servo, divenendo simile agli uomini, si è umiliato, facendosi obbediente fino alla morte, e a una morte di croce. Per questo Dio lo esaltò al più alto rango (Fil 2, 7-9).

La persona più grande è quella che serve di più gli altri, anche se è sconosciuta al mondo. Quindi i Fratelli Paolini non sono tanto noti al mondo ma essi vivono piuttosto nel nascondimento, all'interno delle quattro mura della loro comunità, vivono in fraternità amandosi l'un l'altro con affetto fraterno e vivendo Gesù Cristo comunitariamente. Infatti essi hanno fede nelle parole di Gesù che disse "Dove due o tre si radunano nel mio nome, io sono con loro" (Mt 18,20), e sperimentiamo Gesù nella loro comunità che si riunisce nel suo nome. Essi testimoniano perciò al mondo questa esperienza di Gesù, lavorando nei loro luoghi di apostolato, che essi considerano il pulpito da cui annunciano la Buona Novella di Gesù Cristo. "Non considerano gli uffici, i compiti e gli incarichi, a cui sono chiamati, come fonte di privilegio e di dominio (cfr. 1Pt 5,13, Mt 24,49), ma come una missione di servizio, da compiere a beneficio degli altri, sull'esempio di Cristo che "è venuto, non per farsi servire dagli altri, ma per servire" (Mt 20,28). La loro condizione

(all'interno della comunità) non è misurata dal titolo o da un compito d'onore, che faccia attirare a loro amici o sostenitori; ma la loro grandezza è determinata unicamente dal modo in cui sono fedeli al loro impegno di fraternità e di servizio. Questo è ciò che li rende più grandi agli occhi di Dio. Più si abbassano, più appare la loro grandezza.

Poiché l'apostolato dei Fratelli Paolini è quello di moltiplicare e diffondere la Parola di Dio a milioni di persone in tutto il mondo, essi hanno come primo obbligo quello di vivere essi stessi la Parola di Dio nella loro vita, diventando Fratelli di tutti. "Essere un fratello" per tutti li aiuta a "diventare un fratello" per Cristo e, alla fine, a farli diventare fratelli di Cristo. La Fratellanza Paolina che i Fratelli assumono in se stessi è intesa come "*libertà da*" e "*libertà per*". Questo significa innanzitutto essere liberi dalla schiavitù del peccato, per liberare coloro che sono schiavi dei loro peccati come dice san Paolo: "Fratelli miei, siete stati chiamati a vivere nella libertà. Ma non dovete usare la vostra libertà per soddisfare la vostra natura peccaminosa. Piuttosto, usate la vostra libertà per servire gli uni gli altri nell'amore" (Gal 5,13).

Si tratta perciò di liberare la mente, la volontà e il cuore permettendo allo Spirito di Dio di operare in essi, liberando quegli strati contaminati dagli attaccamenti terreni, per ottenere la qualità profonda della "*libertà da*", conducendoli ad avere un'esperienza intima della Trasfigurazione di Gesù passando per la via del Calvario. Poi lavorando per la "*libertà per*", cioè per essere crocifissi con Cristo, raggiungono il fine ultimo della loro Fratellanza paolina: l'esperienza della Risurrezione del Signore Gesù come afferma San Paolo: "Il mio uomo vecchio è stato crocifisso con Cristo. Non sono più io che vivo, ma Cristo vive in me. Così io vivo in questo corpo mortale confidando nel Figlio di Dio, che mi ha amato e ha dato se stesso per me".

Tutto ciò avviene ravvivando, ricostruendo, rinnovando, rafforzando la loro determinazione per vivere il loro impegno per Gesù: cioè facendo morire il proprio orgoglio e le tendenze egoistiche della mondanità e svincolandosi dalle grinfie degli attaccamenti mondani per evitare di esserne posseduti; impegnandosi inoltre ad essere caritatevoli non solo con coloro che sono accoglienti, ma con tutte le persone specialmente gli anziani, le persone disabili nella comunità.

Nella loro umanità e debolezza, questo loro impegno può anche venir meno, spingendoli a rinunciare ai loro sforzi e ad allontanarli dalla croce che hanno abbracciato. In questi momenti di impotenza essi devono rivolgersi a Gesù nella preghiera, seguendo le tre vie proposte dal loro Fondatore, il Beato Alberione, nel suo libro *"Donec Formetur Christus in Vobis"*: la Via della Purificazione, la Via dell'illuminazione e la Via dell'Unione con Dio. Quando si concentrano su Dio in questi tre passi di preghiera, nel silenzio dei loro cuori, Dio li purifica e li libera da ogni forma di attaccamento alle loro passioni. Scopriranno così che la loro vocazione alla Fratellanza paolina è profondamente umana e pienamente viva sul modello di come Gesù visse e amò tutti gli uomini. La loro chiamata alla libertà deve passare attraverso le tre fasi di annientamento con Gesù, per configurarsi con Gesù, e operare la trasfigurazione con Gesù, tanto da poter dire con coraggio insieme a San Paolo: "Sono stato crocifisso con Cristo. Non sono più io che vivo, ma è Cristo che vive in me" (Gal 2,20). Tutti i loro esercizi spirituali e le loro attività apostoliche sono orientate al fine di aiutarli a salire passo dopo passo verso il monte del Calvario. Mentre si sforzano di scalare questo Calvario della Fraternità Paolina, il Signore li aiuterà con le sue consolazioni spirituali e li ricompenserà con il centuplo qui sulla terra come da Lui promesso. Gesù li nutre e li alimenta ogni giorno con la sua Parola e l'Eucaristia perché possano salire al Calvario della cristocentrica fraternità paolina. È soltanto vivendo questa Fraternità che essi possono rendere al Cristo il suo valore, nelle diverse culture del mondo, proprio come San Paolo fece nel primo secolo. Così come Gesù chiamò i suoi discepoli e visse con loro durante la sua vita in Galilea, allo stesso modo i fratelli paolini sono chiamati a vivere con Gesù nelle comunità. Come poi Gesù portò con sé i suoi discepoli a Gerusalemme, dove egli soffrì e morì per l'umanità, così anche i Fratelli sono chiamati a salire sul monte del Calvario per essere crocifissi con lui sulla croce del loro impegno nella vita quotidiana. Questo si realizza accettando le proprie sofferenze quotidiane per amore dei fratelli nella croce della vita comunitaria. I tre voti di povertà, castità e obbedienza sono simboleggiati da tre chiodi.

Quando Gesù stava percorrendo la strada verso Gerusalemme, Egli spiegò ai suoi discepoli che sarebbe stato consegnato ai peccatori per essere perseguitato e crocifisso; poi, disse loro: "Chiunque vuole essere mio discepolo rinneghi se stesso, prenda la sua croce e mi segua" (Mt

16,24).

Ascoltando tutti questi discorsi di Gesù che parlava della sua morte sulle croce, e che anche loro avrebbero dovuto prendere la propria croce, i suoi discepoli si sentirono molto abbattuti. Erano molto delusi di dover seguire Gesù a questo modo, di dover soffrire e morire. Quindi Gesù volendo rafforzare la loro vocazione e perché scoprissero che dopo la sofferenza avrebbero sperimentato la gloria della risurrezione, Egli mostrò loro l'evento della trasfigurazione facendo loro pregustare quella gloria.

Allo stesso modo quando i fratelli paolini si sentono soli, umiliati, senza speranza, ecc., il Signore vuole mostrare loro la gloria della sua trasfigurazione come ricompensa per la loro accettazione della crocifissione. Per vedere questo evento della Trasfigurazione nella loro vita essi devono accettare la loro quotidiana abnegazione vivendo e compiendo il loro apostolato. Nella vita di Gesù, la croce era il mezzo del suo annientamento. Per essere configurato con Gesù con i tre chiodi dell'umiltà, del distacco e della carità, sulla croce della loro vita comunitaria, l'abnegazione è un dovere per i fratelli. Se essi saranno pienamente fedeli, sicuramente vivranno l'evento della trasfigurazione nella loro vita comunitaria.

Per i fratelli, questo invito per una Fraternità centrata sul Cristo esige una sorta di annientamento in questa vita, attraverso l'accettazione volontaria delle loro sofferenze quotidiane a favore dei loro fratelli sulla croce della vita comunitaria, sul modello della vita di Gesù, la cui croce è diventata il suo strumento per sostenere i suoi seguaci lungo la via della croce verso il Calvario. I fratelli sperimenteranno la trasfigurazione e la resurrezione per mezzo di una configurazione con Gesù, attraverso i tre chiodi dell'umiltà, del distacco e della carità sulla croce della loro vita comunitaria, così come ebbe a dire san Pietro: "Signore, è bello per noi stare qui. Se vuoi, farò tre tende: una per te, una per Mosè e una per Elia" (Mt 17, 4).

Pertanto la Fraternità Paolina che i Discepoli hanno scelto consiste nel lottare per raggiungere l'obiettivo della Trasfigurazione in questa vita e la risurrezione dopo essere stati crocifissi con Cristo sul Calvario.

La spina dorsale della Congregazione

Tutto ciò mostra come questa carismatica Famiglia Paolina si perpetui attraverso la spina dorsale dei Fratelli che il Beato Alberione chiamò "Discepoli del Divin Maestro" e dei quali egli disse: "I Discepoli sono cari come la spina dorsale della Congregazione; da loro mi attendo dei santi; dei servitori fedeli del Padre Celeste, riparatori delle offese che vengono fatte a Gesù Maestro, ricco di grazia e dello Spirito Santo".

Benché egli amasse ardentemente la sua vita di presbitero, il suo amore per i Fratelli non era meno grande, poiché considerava la vita dei Sacerdoti e dei Fratelli come un solo corpo e un solo spirito, intimamente uniti nello medesimo apostolato. Amava e apprezzava i Fratelli dicendo: "Il lavoro del Fratello sostiene l'attività del sacerdote, la rende gioiosa e la fa crescere. Dio è glorificato, il Vangelo è proclamato e le persone sono illuminate".

Con lo zelo del loro protettore, San Paolo, e del loro Beato Fondatore, i Discepoli devono utilizzare la potenza di questi mezzi della comunicazione sociale per raggiungere ogni categoria di persone. Sono chiamati a conquistare il mondo diffondendo i valori di Cristo attraverso questi mezzi. Come dice San Paolo, "Desidero che anche voi lottiate per imitare il Cristo" (Ef 5,1).

I Discepoli devono fare in modo di avere dei programmi televisivi con contenuti morali, con film educativi, una scuola di giornalismo per addestrare l'umanità alla giustizia, pace, impegno sociale, con riviste e giornali e un Centro Universale di Spiritualità, ecc. Possono diventare san Paolo vivo oggi.

Un modello da imitare

È ben noto che nella vita di ogni essere umano, si cerca un modello da imitare. Nonostante sia stato dato loro un modello eccelso in Gesù stesso, i fratelli paolini, tenendo conto della loro natura umana, essi hanno bisogno di un modello umano. Proiettando ed evidenziando la spiritualità per i Fratelli Paolini, il Beato Alberione indica loro come modello di semplicità e di duro lavoro, un uomo e un grande e meraviglioso santo, San Giuseppe. Alberione lo affidò ai Discepoli e presentò loro questa devozione speciale, indicandolo come patrono della fraternità paolina. Anche i Fratelli lo accettano come modello esemplare di semplicità e di amore. Perciò è bene che preghino per l'umiltà, la

semplicità e l'amore fraterno, venerando San Giuseppe come paladino di queste virtù e per avere dedicato tutta la sua vita al servizio di Gesù e di Maria. In questo modo la Fraternità paolina non è tanto un titolo quanto piuttosto un forte impegno per la loro vita di semplicità. I fratelli non sono riconosciuti né per titoli né per la fama, né per una posizione speciale; non hanno risultati appariscenti nella loro vita.

Infatti si tratta di un modello di fratellanza fondato sull'essere, e non una fratellanza basata sull'avere. È un simbolo di vita da vivere come San Giuseppe e un simbolo di amore da condividere senza condizioni. In questo mondo dei media e dei divertimenti, ogni uomo cerca di farsi accettare e amato dagli altri, ma troviamo solo poche persone che danno il loro amore incondizionatamente come Gesù.

La Fraternità Paolina favorisce nella comunità dei Fratelli l'apertura dei cuori e la crescita dell'amore reciproco. Da qui nasce questo dono di fratellanza e fraternità tra loro. Essi possono così diffondere il loro amore sincero e creare tra loro un vero spirito fraterno. Durante la sua vita terrena, San Giuseppe, modello di Fraternità Paolina, ha vissuto questo spirito fraterno e ha protetto le vite di Gesù e Maria.

Possiamo trovare questa realtà di fraternità paolina strettamente collegata con la celebrazione della vita e dell'amore attraverso la celebrazione eucaristica che è simbolo di unità e di fratellanza. Mentre il corpo di Gesù viene spezzato ogni giorno e donato ai Fratelli, a loro volta essi come pane spezzato si offrono gli uni agli altri e diventano alimento per i fratelli. Questa qualità di "spezzare" se stessi in dono per gli altri comincia dal valore fondamentale di far parte dell'umanità, dell'essere fratelli per la persona che ci siede accanto; così come l'accettare l'altro così come egli o ella è; con l'essere una persona attenta e premurosa, ecc.

I Fratelli della Famiglia Paolina devono quindi vivere e donare al mondo Gesù Cristo, Via, Verità e Vita. Devono vivere in Gesù Cristo al punto che Lui solo vive, pensa, lavora, ama, vuole, prega, soffre, muore e risorge in loro. Formano con tutti i credenti in Cristo un corpo mistico in Lui, le cui membra sono unite dalla carità che anima la vita stessa, dove batte un solo cuore, il Cuore di Gesù Cristo.

Comunicazione sociale

La nostra vita è una vita di comunicazione. Ci hanno parlato spesso che il successo nella nostra vita dipende dal nostro duro lavoro, dall'onestà e da molti altri valori, ma non sentiamo dire niente a proposito della comunicazione.

Non dobbiamo dimenticare che tutte le nostre attività si svolgono attraverso la comunicazione. Perciò è molto importante essere effettivamente dei comunicatori. L'efficacia della nostra comunicazione dipende dalla nostra capacità di comunicare tra di noi. L'uso dei mezzi della comunicazione rafforza ancora di più la nostra comunicazione.

In breve, possiamo dire che oltre il nostro duro lavoro dobbiamo anche collaborare con gli altri in modo efficace e innovativo. Per essere innovativi ed efficaci nella nostra comunicazione, non è sufficiente portare delle grandi idee, abbiamo bisogno anche di impegnarci per comunicarle chiaramente.

In una comunicazione efficace bisogna capire l'emozione e le intenzioni che sono dietro l'informazione. Si tratta di essere capaci di trasmettere un messaggio chiaramente. Significa anche ascoltare in modo da capire il pieno significato di ciò che stato detto da altri e permettere a un'altra persona di sentire e capire ciò che noi diciamo.

Inoltre facendo uso dell'esperienza, la comunicazione diventa più efficace quando più spontanea e meno formale. Un discorso che è letto, per esempio, raramente ha lo stesso impatto di un discorso che è fatto con spontaneità. Più mettiamo impegno e pratica, più la nostra comunicazione è spontanea ed efficace.

Oggi, quando le reti e gli strumenti della comunicazione umana hanno raggiunto sviluppi inauditi, sentiamo la sfida di scoprire e trasmettere la "mistica" di vivere insieme, di mescolarci, di incontrarci, di prenderci in braccio, di appoggiarci, di partecipare a questa marea un po' caotica che può trasformarsi in una vera esperienza di fraternità, in una carovana solidale, in un santo pellegrinaggio. In questo modo, le maggiori possibilità di comunicazione si tradurranno in maggiori possibilità di incontro e di solidarietà tra tutti. Se potessimo seguire questa strada, sarebbe una cosa tanto buona, tanto risanatrice, tanto liberatrice, tanto generatrice di speranza! Riconosce le nuove forme di relazioni e partecipazione create dalla comunicazione digitale attuale.

La comunicazione può essere utilizzata come contatto con le cose, le persone e il mondo. Può anche essere usato come rivelazione, comunione mistica con Dio, unità-comunione-intimità, una comunione interpersonale, informazione-dialogo, istituzionale, una trasmissione - informazione o grazia divina, una teoria, una tecnica, un apostolato, predicazione / evangelizzazione.

Il fine speciale è la diffusione del messaggio della salvezza mediante gli strumenti più celeri ed efficaci della comunicazione sociale: stampa, cinema, radio, televisione, dischi, filmmini, ecc.

Poiché noi viviamo in un mondo di Internet e dei media digitali, la nostra comunicazione dell'informazione al mondo intero è diventata più facile e veloce. Con l'uso della nostra esperienza e della tecnologia possiamo raggiungere efficacemente tutti nel mondo, con la buona notizia di Gesù Cristo.

Con lo zelo del nostro patrono san Paolo e del nostro Fondatore, noi membri della Famiglia Paolina dobbiamo usare la potenza di questi mezzi della comunicazione sociale per raggiungere ogni categoria della società. Dobbiamo conquistare il mondo con la diffusione dei valori di Cristo attraverso questi mezzi, come san Paolo ci ha insegnato: "Desidero che anche voi lottiate per imitare il Cristo" (Ef 5,1).

Dobbiamo pensare di avere una televisione con contenuti morali, con film educativi, una scuola di giornalismo per formare l'umanità alla giustizia, alla pace, all'impegno sociale, con delle riviste e dei giornali e un Centro Universale di Spiritualità, ecc. Possiamo diventare san Paolo vivo oggi.

Proposte per una Famiglia Paolina Efficace

- Essendo comunicatori della Parola di Dio attraverso i media delle comunicazioni sociali, i membri della Famiglia Paolina non dovrebbero dimenticare che tutte le loro attività si svolgono attraverso la comunicazione. La sua capacità di comunicare tra i suoi membri.
- Nel mondo di Internet e dei media digitali, la comunicazione di informazioni sull'insegnamento di Gesù Cristo a tutto il mondo è diventata più facile e veloce. Dio ha dato talenti e la tecnologia del mondo moderno.
- Seguendo i seguenti suggerimenti, raccomandazioni e linee

guida che ho proposto allo scopo di vivere e dare a Gesù Cristo il mondo di oggi, sono sicuro, aiutare tutti i membri della Famiglia Paolina ad essere migliori Missionari dei Media in un mondo che ruota sull'innovazione in le sue modalità di comunicazione!

Sant Paolo vive oggi

- In tutte le sue attività è necessario mantenere vivo lo spirito del Beato Giacomo Alberione che non ha mai mancato di sottolineare che la Famiglia Paolina è stata fondata e cresciuta dallo stesso San Paolo per continuare l'opera di diffusione della Buona Novella di Gesù Cristo al mondo moderno in un dato momento grazie all'uso degli ultimi mezzi di comunicazione.
- Ne consegue che dovrebbero sempre avere in mente che la Famiglia Paolina non è altri che lo stesso San Paolo che vive oggi. È vivo con i suoi numerosi membri uniti come un corpo e uno spirito, continuando a fare quello che stava facendo quando viveva sulla terra..

Fraternità di fratelli e sorelle

- Una delle esperienze più gratificanti di lavorare insieme per Dio è la fraternità di Fratellanza e Sorellanza nella Famiglia Paolina. È il nostro Dio che dà il talento al massimo. Spendendo tutte le proprie potenzialità in termini di tempo e talento o tesori della propria mente,
- volontà e cuore per il Signore e provare l'amore fraterno l'uno per l'altro che la Famiglia Paolina può trovare il paradiso qui sulla terra. Ci sono ampie opportunità nelle comunità per promuovere l'unità e un senso di costruzione della comunità tra tutti i membri della Famiglia Paolina.
- Oggi c'è anche più bisogno di costruire le relazioni spezzate di mente e cuore e raccogliere la sfida di scoprire e trasmettere la "fraternità" di vivere insieme, mescolare, incontrare, sostenere, partecipare a tutto ciò che può portare a una vera esperienza di fraternità, in una carovana di solidarietà, in un santo pellegrinaggio verso il paradiso.
- Ogni singola comunità della Famiglia Paolina è sollecitata a vivere questa fraternità. Questa comunità unitaria del raduno

paolino può essere considerata come un microcosmo per il Macrocosmo della Famiglia Paolina in tutto il mondo. Questo si riferisce direttamente alla visione del Fondatore della Famiglia Paolina di vivere e dare a Gesù la Via, la Verità e la Vita in tutto il mondo. L'adempimento di questa visione deve iniziare con e in ogni membro della comunità.

- C'è anche un bisogno acuto di creare un profondo senso di fraternità all'interno della Famiglia Paolina così com'era nella sua fase iniziale ad Alba aprendo i loro cuori l'uno all'altro e aumentando il loro amore per l'altro in termini di lavoro per il Signore.
- Ora, questo è qualcosa che deve iniziare con ciascuna comunità della Famiglia Paolina. Essenzialmente, la qualità di rompere se stessi l'uno per l'altro deve derivare dal valore fondamentale di essere pienamente umani e pienamente vivi come come essere un fratello o una sorella per la persona seduta accanto a noi; come accettare l'altro come lui o lei è; come essere premuroso e compassionevole e così via.
- Essere un fratello o una sorella a beneficio dell'altro li aiuterebbe a diventare Fratello o Sorella per Cristo e alla fine li condurrebbe a essere fratelli e sorelle di Cristo che riversano il loro amore altruistico l'uno verso l'altro.

Carrello con quattro ruote

- Tenendo presente che la Famiglia Paolina è come un carro che si muove sulle quattro ruote della pietà, dello studio, dell'apostolato e della povertà, i Fratelli e le Sorelle della Famiglia Paolina cavalcano su questo carro portando la Buona Novella di Gesù alle persone di tutto il mondo. mondo. Mentre percorre le strade dei media delle comunicazioni sociali del mondo moderno, deve essere controllato accuratamente e regolarmente per assicurare che tutte le sue parti funzionino correttamente, il corpo del carro saldamente unito alle ruote, diventando un'unica entità.
- L'unità nella diversità deve essere il motto di ogni membro della Famiglia Paolina di lavorare insieme sulle sue quattro ruote. Sii San Paolo vivo oggi proprio come Cristo ha vissuto nel cuore di San Paolo, e fa vivere San Paolo nel cuore dei membri della

Famiglia Paolina attraverso la preghiera. "Cristo vive in me!" (Gal 2:20) Vivi come Gesù la vita; pensa come Gesù la verità, e cammina lungo Gesù la strada cavalcando questo carro con lo stesso zelo del nostro patrono San Paolo.

Vita di preghiera

- Tutta la Famiglia Paolina si sta arricchendo con la sua vita di preghiera. Lo studio della Scrittura, la Dottrina Cristiana, la vita del nostro Fondatore e le sue opere ecc. Offrono efficaci linee guida per la preghiera. L'esito della preghiera è il loro lavoro nell'apostolato dei media. Lavorano insieme come una famiglia nella scuola di Gesù Maestro e prendono il mondo.
- I membri della Famiglia Paolina devono essere fedeli alla loro vita di preghiera in modo da integrare la loro vita nella persona di Gesù Cristo, per un amore totale di Dio: intelletto, volontà, cuore e forza fisica.
- Tenendo presente che ogni giorno è uno stadio del viaggio verso il Cielo, devono vivere la vita con la prudenza di abbastanza petrolio o carburante per il viaggio.
- Vivi la vita di preghiera in quanto collega la Famiglia Paolina con Dio. Consideralo come il principale dovere della vita di tutti i giorni posizionando la preghiera prima di tutto e facendo della preghiera la vita di tutti.
- Prega per vivere la vita di Gesù e non pregare per risolvere i problemi creati dall'uomo. È da dire con san Paolo "Vivo ora, non io, ma Cristo vive in me" (Gal 2,20).
- Considerare tutto come niente se non c'è preghiera ma con la preghiera tutto diventa qualcosa di grande. Essere persone di preghiera e persone di azione, in altre parole persone attive e contemplative.
- Trasforma tutto in un tema di meditazione e preghiera davanti al Divin Maestro - una preghiera di adorazione, ringraziamento, espiazione e supplica.

Formazione intellettuale

- Prepara giovani paolini per la vita e la missione paolina in base all'abilità e al talento di ciascuno e non ai propri gusti. Fai notare a loro che lo studio è essenziale per ottenere la conoscenza dei valori umani e cristiani al fine di vivere una vita

migliore in Cristo.

- Rendi obbligatorio per ogni Paolino frequentare un corso sul carisma della Famiglia Paolina nel loro rispettivo paese per conoscere e amare le opere di Dio fatte gradualmente attraverso il Beato Alberione.
- Fedele alle parole di Albert Einstein "Più imparo, più mi rendo conto di quanto non lo so", il Beato Giacomo Alberione dà molta importanza all'aspetto dello studio della missione paolina ed esorta i suoi figli e le sue figlie a studiare per lo scopo di raggiungere la dovuta perfezione e il senso di realizzazione nell'apostolato -
- Studia per conoscere meglio Gesù e la sua dottrina e capirla meglio
- Studia su Gesù la Verità nelle Scritture, le Costituzioni delle nostre Congregazioni, il carisma paolino per comprendere, riflettere e vivere la totalità dell'umanità di Gesù (mente, volontà e cuore) e la totalità della divinità di Gesù (Via, verità e vita).
- Studia la cristologia di Alberione per capire meglio l'aspetto trinitario di Dio. Come le tre persone della Santissima Trinità, condividendo una perfetta relazione reciproca come Padre, il Figlio e lo Spirito Santo è l'esempio perfetto per la nostra vita di unità nella diversità, unendo la Famiglia Paolina. ☂ Studia Gesù Cristo la Via, la Verità e la Vita e le sue due nature al fine di applicare lo stesso alla vita quotidiana e alla missione della Famiglia Paolina.
- Studia le facoltà della mente, della volontà e del cuore in modo da appartenere all "'uomo intero" in Gesù e in noi stessi senza alcuna mutilazione o frammentazione in modo che queste facoltà ci conducano dall'essere inumani all'essere umano, dall'egocentrismo ed egoismo alla Fratellanza o Sorellanza!

Apostolato dei media

- Nello spirito del Fondatore, l'esperienza viva della vita fraterna in comunione con i Fratelli e le Sorelle di tutta la Famiglia Paolina deve essere confermata nella forma di un apostolato attivo in vista dell'importanza della missione. In altre parole, l'esperienza vissuta di Gesù Cristo nella vita comunitaria viene

espressa o portata al mondo.

- Impiega i mezzi più rapidi ed efficaci per predicare attraverso l'uso dei media delle comunicazioni sociali.
- Il contenuto dell'apostolato deve essere globale e tutto abbracciare in base al quale un approccio "olistico" all'apostolato paolino include le seguenti dimensioni:
- Non contare le ore ma fai il lavoro dell'apostolato con tutta l'energia data da Dio, in particolare l'intelligenza, la volontà, il cuore e le energie fisiche per tradurre il modo di vivere del Vangelo in una realtà nelle nostre situazioni di vita di oggi, per formare l'intero uomo in Cristo in tutti gli aspetti di un amore totale di Dio: aggiornarsi con i mezzi di comunicazione più veloci, tecnicamente e intellettualmente come i media di internet, il marketing digitale, gli analoghi di Google, i siti web interattivi, le capacità di comunicazione ecc.
- I centri del libro e dei media paolini devono concentrarsi sull'educazione a valore aggiunto proiettando modi diretti o indiretti di dare i valori di Gesù Cristo nei bisogni percepiti del pubblico a partire da valori umani (come la pubblicazione di "Better Yourself Books" in India).
- Promuovere una maggiore collaborazione tra tutti i membri della Famiglia Paolina, inclusi gli Istituti Secolari e i Cooperatori Paolini, fornendo opportunità di lavorare insieme.
- Con lo zelo del loro santo protettore, l'apostolo Paolo e il loro fondatore, il beato Alberione, i membri della famiglia paolina devono usare il potere dei mezzi di comunicazione sociale per raggiungere ogni categoria della società. Devono conquistare il mondo diffondendo i valori di Cristo attraverso questi mezzi. Come insegna San Paolo: "Desidero che anche tu combatta per imitare il Cristo" (Ef 5: 1).
- La forza propulsiva di ogni paolino è l'invito di San Paolo a "tendere avanti" per cui devono proiettarsi nel futuro con un canale televisivo dal contenuto morale, con film educativi, una scuola di giornalismo per formare l'umanità sulla via della giustizia, pace, impegno sociale, con riviste e giornali e un Centro Universale di Spiritualità, ecc. per diventare San Paolo vivo oggi!

Distacco:

- Sta morendo per la loro pigrizia, orgoglio, tendenze egoistiche della mondanità ecc. E per essere libero dalle grinfie degli attaccamenti mondani per non essere posseduto da loro. Sii caritatevole con le potenzialità di Dio date per l'opera di Dio e per tutte le persone specialmente gli anziani e i disabili nella comunità.
- Chiedi al Signore la grazia dello spirito di povertà, che include anche le dimensioni della salute, un'educazione sana e un carattere impeccabile. Riguarda tutto ciò che riguarda le necessità quotidiane come il cibo, la residenza, l'abbigliamento e tutte le cose necessarie per la vita.
- Avere tutto per l'apostolato, ma non possedere nulla per se stessi per consentire alla Famiglia di ottenere ciò che è necessario per svolgere l'apostolato e anche sostenere i bisogni umani fondamentali. Vivi una vita di povertà per fare più atti di carità come quelle che il Figlio di Dio ha fatto nella casetta di Nazareth.
- Rinunciare al piacere di compiacere se stessi, abbandonare gli abiti ostentati e ridimensionare le condizioni di vita è una grande conquista per il Cielo. Dipende da Dio per tutto con fiducia e confidenza che Dio si prenderà cura della Famiglia Paolina mentre si prende cura degli uccelli dell'aria ma non si affida mai ai tesori terreni.
- Devono integrare tutte le quattro ruote come un'unica occupazione di pietà che include la Santa Messa, la meditazione e il tempo prima del Santissimo Sacramento.
- Insieme alla loro vita di preghiera devono studiare per formare il loro intelletto per conoscere la Verità, la Parola di Dio, le dottrine di Gesù Cristo, le vite dei santi e così via!

La mia chiamata alla famiglia Paolina

Non ci sono parole che possano spiegare la storia dell'azione soprannaturale di Dio in essere umano come me. Posso solo spiegare una parte di questa storia della mia vita di fraternità. Non ho sentito la voce di Dio che mi chiamava a seguirlo da vicino in una maniera fisica. Fu soltanto un'ispirazione nel profondo del mio cuore per essere con Gesù davanti al tabernacolo il più sovente possibile.

Non so come esprimere questo in parole, ma posso descrivere come questo sentimento è diventato una realtà. Forse può essere una chiamata come l'esperienza dei due Apostoli sulla loro strada di Emmaus. Può essere anche una chiamata come l'esperienza di San Matteo o di qualche altro apostolo quando Gesù l'ha chiamato per nome. Per scoprire questo mi ci sono voluti molti anni. E' una chiamata unica, ma con due fasi come nella vita di Gesù:

Il periodo della vita in Galilea (cioè, essere un discepolo vivendo con Gesù) e il periodo di Gerusalemme (diventare un discepolo nella sofferenza con Gesù). Con l'impegno di essere un fratello per tutti quelli che hanno bisogno della fraternità la mia appartenenza infine mi guida a vivere il Mistero Pasquale di Gesù, come suo discepolo vicino a Lui, e nell'esperienza qui sulla terra della gloria della sua trasfigurazione. Per pregustare questa gloria celeste qui sulla terra ho cominciato il mio cammino con i Fratelli della Famiglia Paolina il 6 luglio 1975.

All'inizio ho avuto soprattutto una formazione intellettuale e umana; studiando le lingue di inglese e hindi; componendo le pagine alla monotype per la stampa; imparando a vivere in comunità con gli altri fratelli, ecc.

Inoltre ho imparato come ottenere meriti per il paradiso con i miei esercizi di virtù e molte altre pratiche di pietà, facendo piccole cose con una motivazione soprannaturale. Così ho cercato di essere fedele ai miei doveri quotidiani con la massima cura. Questi atti mi hanno guidato a una sorta di scrupolosità per far piacere a Dio e ai miei superiori, come la puntualità, l'osservazione del silenzio a cominciare dalla preghiera della sera fino al tempo della colazione, lo studio, il lavoro, la pratica della povertà, ecc.

Dopo avere completato due anni di Aspirantato, sono entrato nel periodo del Postulato. Durante questo periodo della mia formazione avevo l'abitudine di immaginare con curiosità la vita del Noviziato. Lo consideravo come se fosse il paradiso della vita religiosa sulla terra e desideravo da tempo di potervi entrare. Quando entrai nel noviziato nel 1978 mi insegnarono come esercitare la mia mente con pensieri spirituali, facendo la volontà di Dio in ogni cosa, vivendo la vita in vista dalla vita dopo la morte. Cominciai a mettere in pratica tutto quello che

avevo imparato in classe; le costituzioni, la dottrina dei voti, la liturgia, ecc.

Durante tutto il mio noviziato fui separato del mondo esterno: nessun giornale, nessuna corrispondenza, nessuna telefonata e così via. Non c'era la possibilità di contatti con i miei famigliari, che mi mancavano molto, ma li raccomandavo a Dio continuamente nelle mie preghiere.

I miei due fratelli e una sorella e i miei genitori, che vivevano con me nel sud dell'India, dove nacqui come primogenito, collaborarono con me e mi aiutarono ad essere fedele alla chiamata che avevo ricevuto. Anche loro mi mostrarono che la cosa più importante nella mia vita era la relazione o l'unione con Dio nella preghiera. Essendo un chierichetto nella chiesa del mio villaggio, durante la mia l'infanzia, quando vivevo con loro, mi piaceva guidare le preghiere della sera. Queste attività della mia prima infanzia mi aiutò ad entrare nell'oasi della meditazione e della preghiera durante il mio noviziato.

Inoltre, la mia formazione continuò attraverso una devota santa persona, che era il mio direttore spirituale, il quale mi aiutò a rispondere alla chiamata di Dio. Queste pratiche mi aiutarono a consacrarmi al Signore, il 30 giugno 1979.

Ho sperimentato la gioia e la pace quando mi consacrai al Signore ed entrai nel gruppo degli Juniors nella città di Allahâbâd, nel nord dell'India. Durante i miei sei anni di juniorato ho vissuto in tre città. Allahâbâd, Mumbai e Bangalore. Imparai molte cose, che rafforzarono la mia vita consacrata, nella pratica delle virtù. Trovai una profonda gioia nell'unione con il Signore abbandonandomi alla Sua santa volontà.

Poiché avevo deciso di consacrarmi totalmente al Signore per tutta la mia vita, preparai il mio cuore per essere toccato dall'amore misericordioso di Dio con una lunga settimana di esercizi spirituali. Mi aiutarono a fare morire in me l'uomo vecchio mortificando la mentalità mondana e permettere allo Spirito del Signore di purificare il mio essere: la mia mente, la mia volontà e il mio cuore. Il Signore mi preparò a rimettere le mie debolezze in Lui, affinché Egli potesse rafforzare le mie facoltà umane. Rimettendo il mio ego, l'orgoglio e ogni genere di attaccamento, a Gesù, Egli mi liberò dalla paura di camminare con Lui sulla via regale della croce. Egli esercitò la mia volontà per diventare

distaccato dalle creature e per rispondere al suo amore con atti di carità. Con cuore profondo, purificato e leggero dissi il mio "sì" al Signore per sempre nel giorno solenne del 15 agosto 1985.

Dopodiché per i seguenti 19 anni della mia vita consacrata imparai molte altre cose, a riguardo della mia vita come fratello paolino. Io optai per il corso di tre anni di studi religiosi e imparai come la vita umana può essere distrutta in due modi: la povertà esterna e il vuoto interiore. Il primo modo, con la mancanza delle necessità basilari della vita umana; l'altro, con il sovraccarico delle ricchezze, la mancanza di pace interiore, volontà e cuore.

Il Signore mi ispirò a fare qualcosa per superare queste mancanze in quella zona della città in cui vivevo e io risposi a Lui con un impegno. In tutti questi tre anni della mia presenza il questo centro di studi di Vidya Deep in Bengalûru ho potuto impegnarmi con un gruppo di Fratelli e visitai le baracche di un quartiere della città. Abbiamo offerto sostegno morale e educazione di base ai bambini poveri per sollevare il loro tenore di vita per una vita decente.

Oltre a queste attività sociali ho imparato di più a riguardo dei valori umani e cristiani, per esempio come essere un fratello per la persona che siede accanto a me; come accettare l'altro come lui o lei è; come essere una persona attenta e compassionevole ecc.

Tra le tante cose che ho imparato, quella che amo di più è "essere un fratello" più che "diventare un fratello". Sono arrivato a capire nella mia lunga esperienza che il termine "Fratello" simboleggia un "amore altruistico". Quindi dove c'è fraternità c'è amore e dove c'è amore per l'altro c'è la fraternità. Questo mi ricorda un incidente che capitò in una comunità dei fratelli di Saint Patrick.

Un vescovo fu invitato a presiedere alla messa inaugurale di un'incontro dei fratelli religiosi che si teneva in una delle città nel sud dell'India. Durante la cerimonia inaugurale dopo la Messa, un ragazzino della loro scuola che aveva un'esperienza dello stile di vita dei Fratelli, si avvicinò al vescovo e gli fece una domanda innocente: "monsignore, quando diventerai fratello?". Sembrerebbe una domanda ridicola, ma a ben riflettere troveremo il senso di essere un fratello o diventare un fratello. Perciò mi invita fortemente a vivere una vita integrata salendo la scala

della Fratellanza, gradino per gradino: dalla Fratellanza Universale alla fratellanza umana; dalla fratellanza umana alla fraternità cristiana; dalla fraternità cristiana alla fraternità religiosa e infine dalla fraternità religiosa alla fraternità Paolina.

La fraternità Paolina che devo assimilare consiste nella "libertà da" e "libertà per". È prima di tutto essere libero dalla mia propria schiavitù del peccato in modo da liberare coloro che sono schiavi dei loro peccati, come dice san Paolo: "fratelli, voi siete stati chiamati alla libertà; soltanto non fate della libertà un'occasione per vivere secondo la carne, ma per mezzo dell'amore servite gli uni gli altri; (Gal 5; 13)

Quando avrò liberato la mia mente, la mia volontà e il mio cuore permettendo allo Spirito di Dio di lavorare dentro di me per cancellare la falsità degli attaccamenti mondani: egoismo, orgoglio, insensibilità, mancanza di carità, avrò la "libertà da". Avrò un'esperienza vicina alla Trasfigurazione di Gesù. Così quando lavoro per la "libertà per", cioè quando sono crocifisso con Cristo, raggiungerò il fine ultimo della mia fraternità paolina: la risurrezione del Signore Gesù, come afferma san Paolo: "Il mio uomo vecchio è stato crocifisso con Cristo. Non sono più io che vivo, ma Cristo vive in me " (Gal 2:20). Ciò richiama fortemente a una fraternità Cristocentrica che mi chiede di accettare le sofferenze di questa vita. Cioè, cominciando dall'accettazione delle mie sofferenze quotidiane per seguire e amare i miei fratelli sulla croce della vita comunitaria. Nella vita di Gesù la croce fu il mezzo per la sua spoliatura. Se voglio fare esperienza della trasfigurazione e della resurrezione mi devo configurare a Gesù con i tre chiodi dell'umiltà, del distacco e della carità sulla croce della mia vita comunitaria. Se sono fedele a questo impegno integrale, sono certo che sperimenterò la trasfigurazione, nella mia vita comunitaria, come dice San Pietro: "Signore, è bene per noi stare qui. Se vuoi metterò tre tende: una per te, una per Mosè e una per Elia. "(Mt 17,4)

Ciò che devo fare è richiamare, ricominciare, rinnovare, rinforzare con determinazione la consacrazione a Gesù, che ho professato molti anni fa. Devo morire al mio orgoglio e alla tendenza egoistica della mondanità. Essere libero dai conflitti che mi legano alle cose mondane e non farmi dominare da esse. Essere caritatevole non solo con chi è caritatevole, ma con tutti, con le persone anziane, i disabili della comunità, ecc.

Essendo umano, questo mio impegno mi causa molte difficoltà. Certe volte trovo estremamente difficile lottare contro il mio ego e l'orgoglio, l'attaccamento a ogni genere di conforto che il mondo può offrire.

Questo egocentrismo mi allontana dalla croce che ho abbracciato. In questo momento di debolezza mi rivolgo a Gesù nella preghiera. Voglio mettere in pratica i tre momenti del nostro Beato Fondatore, Giacomo Alberione, che ha indicato nel suo libro *"Donec Formetur Christus in Vobis"*: la Via della Purificazione, la Via dell'Illuminazione e Via dell'Unione con Dio.

Quando oriento la mia vita su Dio in questi tre passi di preghiera, nel silenzio del mio cuore, Dio mi purifica e mi libera da ogni genere di attaccamento. Penso che la mia vocazione consista nell'amare come Gesù ha amato. La mia fratellanza è una chiamata alla libertà. Si tratta di passare attraverso tre stadi: di annientamento con Gesù, di configurazione con Gesù e di trasfigurazione con Gesù a tal punto che posso osare di dire insieme a San Paolo "Sono stato crocifisso con Cristo. Non sono più io che vivo, ma Cristo che vive in me. "

Tutti i quaranta esercizi spirituali e molte altre pratiche spirituali che ho praticato per tanti anni sono mezzi che mi hanno aiutato a salire al Calvario. Così mi impegno per salire il monte della fraternità Paolina e il Signore mi aiuta con consolazioni spirituali e con il centuplo qui sulla terra come promesso da Gesù.

Tra i tanti doni che il Signore mi ha offerto, vorrei ricordare un evento indimenticabile quello del mio venticinquesimo di professione (Giubileo d'argento) nel 2004.

Ho avuto la rara opportunità di unirmi a un gruppo di Sorelle e Fratelli Paolini, che celebravano il loro Giubileo presso il Santuario della Regina degli Apostoli e nel pellegrinaggio ad Alba e alla casa natale del nostro Fondatore.

Ora il Signore mi ha mandato a fare questo corso sul Carisma del Fondatore. Questo è un altro aspetto del centuplo: di fare esperienza dell'amore e della fraternità della Famiglia Paolina.

Inoltre il Signore mi nutre ogni giorno con la sua Parola e con l'Eucaristia per aiutarmi a vivere una fraternità Cristocentrica. È solo vivendo la

fraternità che posso dare significato al mio vivere in Cristo nelle diverse culture del mondo, proprio come San Paolo fece nel primo secolo.

Perciò la fraternità Paolina a cui aspiro non è un semplice titolo, ma significa essere realmente un fratello per Gesù e per gli altri. Questo è il proposito: di appartenere a Dio e ai suoi figli dando e mettendo a disposizione tutto il mio essere, in particolare per la Famiglia Paolina, e in generale per tutti coloro quelli che sono nel bisogno.

Notes

[← 1]

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[← 2]
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[← 3]

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[← 26]
Ibid.

[← 27]

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[← 28]
Ibid. p 21

[← 29]
Ibid. p 22

[← 30]

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[← 34]

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From the talk of Fr. Silvio Sassi at the Convention on Saint Paul on 3 January 2008, in view of the Pauline jubilee year (28 June 2008 - 29 June 2009).